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## ERRATA.

- Page 80. Fifth line from top insert word "all" before "adversity."
- Page 115. In ninth line change the word "aught" to "naught."
- Page 126. In fifteenth line change the word "would" to "should."
- Page 167. Last word in the twelfth line should be "threne."
- Page 189. In the thirteenth line insert the word "light" before "divine."
- Page 232. In last line after the word "moulds" insert "us."
- Page 242. The last word of the sixteenth line should be "spijt."



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POEMS AND SONNETS



# POEMS AND SONNETS

BY  
HERBERT PRICE



E. W. WELCH  
QUEENSTOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

1914





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## POEMS



## POMONA

"A wild desolate stretch of burning sand."—*The State*,  
May, 1910.

DOWN in the west beneath the dauntless azure,  
And open glare of heat that never falters,  
Where all day long across the lurid heavens,  
Wheels the red circle of th'unfuelled splendour  
That from undated years hath scorched the desert,  
And made the iron crested ridges quiver,  
Even as a tigress when her mate approaches,  
Quivers before his sudden flame of onset ;  
There sweep wide downs that yield no blade of  
pasture,

Smooth undulations close the dim horizon,  
And in the stifled cauldrons of the valleys  
Stand the bare branches of ungainly bushes  
That slant across the sun like sheaves of arrows,  
Or querulous quills in quick defence uplifted.  
There long low rocks above the rounded billows,  
And wind-ribbed dunes that swell and roll together,  
Stretch like dead serpents in the fervid silence,  
And giant boulders burnished by the ages  
Loom like black bosses on a shield of copper,  
And weathered stones, outflung in tumbled masses,  
Litter the slopes and shoulders of the ranges,  
Haggard as death's unburied heaps of battle.  
There lie deep hollows where no drop of water

Mirrors the steel blue dome of torrid anger,  
 That in midnoon is like the cope of Hades  
 When all the angels of revolt are gathered  
 In marshalled ranks about their blazing banner.  
 O'er those brown leagues not even a lonely shadow,  
 Cast by the wing of some sky-ranging eagle,  
 Skims down the wind towards the glimmering ocean,  
 Life's adumbration for a fleeting moment,  
 Seen on the dewless desert's barren bosom.  
 No mists creep up to rest in all those valleys,  
 Like great white birds that sleep in secret places,  
 And with the dawn trail o'er the seaward mountains,  
 Unto the morning music of the waters.  
 No vapours cling about those ebon boulders ;  
 No rains descend upon those arid reaches ;  
 And there no bee enjoys the glad delirium  
 That thrills her when she slips into the poppy,  
 And rolls and riots in a reckless rapture.  
 No swarm of locusts like a drifted shower,  
 Goes drizzling down into the sultry sunset,  
 And on those stones no glossy lizards glitter.  
 No sigh of life is heard ; no cry of anguish  
 Wails through the heat from throats athirst, and  
     choking  
 In the thick gasps of dusty dissolution.  
 No matin song awakes the happy echoes  
 Through all those tawny miles of ruined desert ;  
 Not even the fabled salamander basketh



On those hot mirrors of the shining basalt.  
And when the evening closes like a furnace  
Shut down in hell upon a crush of demons,  
The very rocks rejoice to be delivered,  
And to the sandy waste a like appeasement  
Comes with the advent of the gracious twilight.  
There on a day that no man now remembers,  
Urged on by prescient pulses of disaster,  
And ringed about with fire of towering whirlwinds,  
And smothered in a shimmering sea of ether,  
White hot, enswathing all the naked landscape,  
Came one who tottered on bare feet, ensanguined  
By fevered marches through a blistered country.  
And ever round him as he moved, a swelter  
As of the winds that blow o'er flowing lava,  
Stifled his breath, and throbbed against his temples,  
And in his eyes was like the scalding vapours  
That hiss against a world of molten metals,  
Yet wounding with a keener prick of anguish,  
For all his scars relentless winds corroded,  
And broke across with dry decrepitation  
That knew no ease or soothing touch of moisture.  
Never in all vicissitudes of horror  
Hath man been so abandoned to the furies.  
Out of all ways and chances of assistance  
He moved, with fate in urgent haste to speed him,  
And still before him rose delirious visions,  
That called and vanished, and returned to beckon,

Leading him on through the insatiate desert  
Unto a death remorselessly appointed,  
Where no good angel in a guiding glory  
May lead him upward into calmer regions ;  
So that his spirit o'er the windy wastelands,  
Wailing for ever in a hopeless circle,  
And seeking still some sure surcease of torture,  
Returneth back to where his perished body  
Dries in the sun, like any beast of burden  
Abandoned on the march and so forgotten.  
What crime was his that drove him out of comfort  
Into the grip of nature starved to anger ?  
What high resolves were his the fates defeated ?  
What love rejected sent him forth to wander  
Out of the course and passage of his fellows ?  
What hopes were swept into a grey oblivion ?  
What young desires were by the frosts of wisdom  
Nipt in their sheaths and coldly left to perish ?  
What magic stories lured him to adventure  
Forth on a path heroic souls have followed,  
And often made a wider track for knowledge  
Than felt the feet of perished generations ?  
What madness drove him with unbated fury  
Into these desperate regions of inferno ?  
No answer comes, or loud, or softly whispered,  
Out of the winds on which his viewless spirit  
Moves to and fro, in tireless search of exit  
From the sad circle of his lonely prison.

Only we know that there upon the desert  
 Sun-shrivelled nomads found him dead, and lying  
 Dry as a mummy in the sands that sifted  
 Into his eyes and through the latticed spaces  
 Made by his ribs and shrunken shreds of muscle.  
 And there they scooped a hollow in the valley  
 To hide his corpse from the unblinking heavens,  
 And as they moved him, lo ! from palm and pocket  
 Into the sand fell gems of peerless lustre,  
 Torrents of light that made a tinkling music,  
 And flashed and glittered from their changing facets,  
 Streamed here and there from out his tattered  
 garments.

Diamonds enough between his fleshless fingers  
 To reach the cost and purchase of a kingdom,  
 Slid out and scattered in a blaze of wonder ;  
 And all about the starry fire of jewels  
 Ran down the sand and gathered into hollows  
 Shining like flecks of moonlight in a forest.  
 Great gems that lay for ages in the desert  
 And drew away the eyes of crouching lions  
 To leave their prey and gaze upon the splendour  
 Shot through the darkness of a dateless midnight,  
 Flashed and were hidden in the dust beneath him.  
 But those who buried bones and rags together,  
 Left all these gems to drift about the valley,  
 And reared a grave in simple human service  
 Over his corse that so was doomed to perish.

## PIONEERS

ON ways fulfilled of glory  
They march with singing feet,  
And though the light be hoary,  
And though no flower be sweet,  
Though clouds on darkness follow,  
And over hill and hollow  
Flies not one summer swallow,  
They turn not to retreat.

But those who droop and perish  
Because their fear is great,  
Who only strive to cherish  
Their own especial state,  
Lament when yields are rated  
For gains by loss abated,  
For avid dreams unsated,  
And rains that came too late.

For these the earth is rotten,  
A vale of dole and pain,  
Where creatures misbegotten  
Beget themselves again ;  
Their skies are grey with ashes,  
And sleet that stings and lashes,  
And the only gleam that flashes  
Glints off a golden chain.

4  
But those gone out and seaward  
Fear no assaults of fate ;  
They drift ahead or leeward  
With hearts and souls elate ;  
They see the vision splendid,  
Fierce suns by suns attended,  
Strong light with stronger blended,  
And all things free and great.

Dark days and nights as beamless  
Gloom o'er them, drenched with rain ;  
And some are dead and dreamless,  
But none is thrall to pain ;  
Still each with each rejoices,  
And their unbroken voices  
Sing down the tuneless noises  
That mark the world's disdain.

Though all their hopes and visions  
Like famished flames be dead,  
Though all the world's derisions  
Clang round each lifted head,  
They pause not yet to wonder  
At such discordant thunder,  
For far and faint out yonder  
The guiding Gleam is sped.

Not now, and not hereafter  
Will these be born to earth ;  
Their suns go down to laughter,  
Their dawns awake to mirth ;  
For them the cloud is lifted,  
The mist drawn up, and drifted  
To where, by cool winds rifted,  
The light wins through to birth.

Though crushed they will not falter,  
Though ravaged none will fail,  
Though checked by curb and halter  
Such checks will not avail ;  
In search of Eldorado,  
Where lies no sleepy shadow,  
They march o'er hill and meadow  
Along the haunted trail.

They fear no raging blizzards,  
Nor any storms that shriek,  
Where weird and white as wizards  
O'er frozen tarn and creek  
Loom lonely hills that never  
Heard song of bird or river,  
And round whose sides for ever  
The winds are loud and bleak.



They go from man degraded  
By laws and creeds that cramp,  
To where by light invaded  
From some uplifted lamp,  
They see the vast expanses,  
Where day o'er night advances,  
And all the changing chances  
That reach the vanward camp.

They leave the noisome city  
For open fields and skies,  
Where sorrow needs no pity,  
And anguish never cries ;  
They call the weeping mothers,  
And men their weary brothers,  
To where no dead creed smothers  
The soul's integrities.

They go where fetid breezes  
Blow out the lees of pain ;  
They scorn the rest that eases  
The overwearied brain ;  
And where no gold requites them,  
Nor trumpet call incites them,  
They for a world that slights them  
Reap fields of deadly grain.

Their bones upon the byway  
Mark stages where they fell,  
While we along the highway  
Marched singing down to hell.  
Hot sands and dread morasses,  
Dim woods too dim for grasses,  
Through these the legion passes,  
Led by the seeking spell.

We owe them, we the weaker,  
Who dared not face the odds,  
The faith that aids the seeker,  
Not scourge of scorn or rods ;  
To us in twilight hidden,  
They call from heights forbidden,  
Where only they have ridden,  
And surely they are gods.



## FERDINAND TO HÉLÈNE

(See " Tragic Comedians ")

WHAT thought assails my mind,  
That is as sweet as dewy roses are,  
When the dawn comes to dim the morning star,  
That is as secret as the gentle wind,  
Breathing about the flower-beds to find  
And waft their souls afar ?

What thought comes like a dream  
Under the lids of innocence asleep,  
And stirs the sluggish veins until they leap  
And frolic like each little mountain stream,  
That runs to levels where the grasses gleam  
Bright round the peaceful sheep ?

What thought is like the spring  
That warmly brooding underneath the mould  
Releases all the frozen saps from cold,  
And moves them till they clothe each barren thing  
With vesture of the season's burgeoning,  
Purple, and pink, and gold ?

What thought assails my soul  
With terror, and with sorrow, and with joy,  
With longing and reluctance to employ

Means to attain the still receding goal,  
With passion that o'ermasters all control,  
And hopes the fates destroy ?

Ah ! heaven ! the thought of thee  
Comes like the scent of roses on the air,  
Comes like the spring to make the world more fair,  
Comes like a dream whose nameless agony  
Welters in darkness through a stormy sea,  
And drowns me in despair.

## AL FRESCO

## I

O! we weep beneath the starlight at the bitter  
thoughts that blight us,  
When the icy wind is freezing all the tender things  
that grow,  
And around us in the darkness there are noises that  
affright us,  
Eerie lamentations sobbing out of hearts attuned to  
woe,  
    Like repentant spirits, moaning  
    For the sins that wait atoning  
In a land where evil visions swim like vapours to  
and fro.

Every star is cold and pallid in the ebon vaulted sky,  
All the hills are black and sombre that o'ergloom the  
dreary plains,  
And along the dewless valleys wails a wind that  
seems to cry  
Like a maid whose heart is tortured by a bond her  
soul disdains,  
    And a formless dread enfolds us,  
    And a terror grips and holds us  
Till our blood is frozen wholly in our irresponsive  
veins.

'Tis a region of disaster where the thunders roll and  
 bellow,  
 And the earth is never wetted by a single drop of  
 rain,  
 Where along the pillared gorges streams of lightning  
 lurid-yellow  
 Scatter iron hills asunder as a thresher scatters  
 grain,  
     And where dusty columns, lifting  
     One by one, are slowly drifting,  
 And the sluits run gaping seaward, like red wounds  
 across the plain.

Years on years for generations they have seldom  
 felt the rush  
 Of the thick and sudden waters tearing at their  
 rootless sides,  
 And for ages yet hereafter they will never see the  
 blush  
 Of a flower grace the morning, nor the swing of  
 grassy tides,  
     But with burning throats athirst,  
     They will long for rain to burst  
 Out of clouds whose fiery bosoms carry that and  
 naught besides.

Here the dassies bark and chitter at the eagle  
 swooping by,

And the meercats on their haunches sit and gaze  
 into the glare,  
 Seeing there a speck of danger that for human  
 sight's too high,  
 And the cobra sways his body while he fixes with  
 his stare

Some small creature, terror stricken,  
 And the rhythmic circles quicken  
 Till the deadly stroke's delivered hissing flame-like  
 through the air,

Here for ever through the darkness when the wind  
 is moaning low,  
 And the moonlight like a leprous skin enfolds the  
 naked earth,  
 You may hear the sighing whispers of the ghosts of  
 long ago,  
 As they glide about the places where they lived and  
 had their mirth,

Sighing for the beauty faded  
 From the homes no drought invaded  
 When they loved, and worked, and idled in a time  
 that knew no dearth.

Here we reach no bourne of pleasure in the daylight  
 or the darkness,  
 'Tis a land of blistered ruin like an inner court of  
 hell,

All the hills are black and barren, and the plains are  
     bare and parkless,  
 And each homestead, long deserted, breaks and  
     crumbles like a shell,  
         Therefore we will also leave it  
         Like the dead, but never weave it,  
 As they have, into those fibres that remember all  
     things well.

## II

O ! WE laugh beneath the starlight at the little  
     things that please us,  
 When the wind is blowing westward o'er the misty  
     eastern hills,  
 And the swaying branches rustle till the leaves begin  
     to tease us  
 With a gentle titillation as of faintly fluttered frills,  
         That touch a neck all creamy,  
         White, and curved, and very dreamy  
 When its columned beauty pulses to her winning  
     laughter's thrills.

But from laughter down to sorrow in a moment we  
     are drifted  
 When we think of all the anguish that awaits us in  
     the years,  
 Not a thought have we for pleasure when we lie  
     with eyes uplifted

To the bitter stars above us that are callous to our  
tears,

Then our souls are full of terror,

And we see as in a mirror

Two sad figures bent and broken underneath a  
weight of fears.

And when the moonlight slowly over hill and vale  
approaches

Till all the stars are pallid in the silver flooded sky,  
Silver belts, and swords, and crosses, and a train of  
silver coaches

Slipping into deeper distance of the void's immensity,

Then perchance a sudden glory

Like the magic of a story

Told of fairies floats about us and we cease to weep  
and sigh.

For our thoughts are glad to travel like sweet airs  
and odours blowing

Over gardens where the sunlight like a benediction  
lies,

Clothing leaves, and buds, and blossoms in a colour  
richly glowing,

And flushing into beauty all the scented mysteries,

Breeze and odours sweetly mingle

With the music from the dingle,

Where the raptured birds are singing up a scale of  
ecstasies.



Not a moment then we linger in the shadowed vales  
 and passes  
 Where disaster waits to snare us in a net of poisoned  
 skeins,  
 Quick we leave the rocky ridges, and the land of  
 faded grasses,  
 And with joyous pulses beating reach the flower  
 fretted plains,  
         White, and gold, and red and yellow,  
         Every flower with its fellow  
 Dancing for the joy of living in the time of summer  
 rains.

Ever higher now like eagles that would reach the  
 empyrean,  
 Up our spirits soar enraptured with the fervid dreams  
 of love,  
 And we seem to hear the music of a faintly chanted  
 pæan  
 Flowing down the silver heavens from some choir  
 far above,  
         Singing very sweetly for us  
         In a soft and holy chorus,  
 Till our pulses beat together like the pinions of a  
 dove.

O ! the beauty of the starlight and the moonlight  
 there around us,



When the balmy wind is cooling all the sorrows of  
the earth,  
And the mighty constellations with their majesty  
astound us,  
And we see the cloudy wonder of a universe in birth,  
And we hear the music winging  
Down the heavens, like the singing  
Of a happy angel choir changing misery to mirth.

## ODE ON THE UNIFICATION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COLONIES

### I

THERE was a time imbued with mutual hate,  
 When anger like a fire,  
 Burned from our heart the impulse to aspire ;  
 Yea ! all our souls were brought to low estate,  
 For pride o'erbrimmed us, and we would not wait  
 On nature's slower and more certain gait,  
 But in a fret of ire  
 Leaped the abyss, and marred our great desire.  
 Abject and dire  
 Was our close bondage to a boonless fate,  
 For we were blind ;  
 Our reason was enslaved, our love a flower  
 Hurt by the wind  
 Of passion, that was still an evil power  
 To blight the mind ;  
 Destructive as a hot volcanic shower  
 That leaves but dust behind.

### II

We only reaped what we had sown ;  
 Our thoughts were seeds  
 Which, year by year more deeply grown,  
 And with each season farther blown,

O'erran with weeds  
 All the remote still corners of the land,  
 And spoiled what nature planned ;—  
 Arrested the incalculable growth  
 That moving up from age to age,  
 Wins us to leave barbaric sloth,  
 And checks the beast's impetuous rage,  
 Until we gain the strength to go,  
 Heedless of the opposing foe,  
 Who only batters flesh and blood,  
 But cannot hurt that sense of good  
 Which lifts us to the starry skies,  
 And helps us to devise  
 Immortal harmonies.

### III

There is in nature, if we hear aright,  
 A calling voice that leads to light ;  
 A low, soft voice  
 That all the creatures of the veld obey ;  
 A power is on the earth, and in the grey  
 Cool dawn, when all the choristers rejoice,  
 And in each atom of the universe,  
 Whether it lie within a frozen sea  
 Inert in seeming death,  
 Or flash as light across immensity ;  
 A power omnipotent that stirs  
 In every vagrant breeze and passing breath,

That sometimes in a lift  
 Of sudden light, when all the air is still,  
 Unfolds the deeps of being to our gaze,  
 And shows us the eternal flow and drift  
 Of fluid matter in whose windless haze  
 For ever broods the unfathomable Will ;  
 A power that gives the pansy at our feet  
 Strength to endure the heat,  
 That whirls the nebulous mist in ordered rings,  
 And in a bird note sings,  
 That helps the deeper vision of the soul  
 To see the spacious beauty that enfolds and lights  
       the whole.

## IV

As the spring wakes and breathes,  
 Feeling the gladness of the wider skies,  
 And dreaming of a glory under wreaths  
 Of fragrant mysteries,  
 So do we stir and move,  
 Touched in the very essence of our being,  
 By some great force that issues from above,  
 That frees our reason, and unclouds our seeing,  
 And warms our blood to pulses of a universal love.

## V

Brothers we are, not merely of the flesh,  
 For in dark years behind us, when the world

Like a great broken vessel on the deep,  
 Weltered through unimaginable fears,  
 And murder, with red eyes upon the cross,  
 Slew thousands in the tender name of Christ,  
 We fought together for the higher right,  
 Holding in check the fell advancing hosts  
 That dreamed of carnage, while their cruel lips  
 Moved to the music of a Christian prayer.  
 Yea ! in the desperate ages lately gone,  
 When limbs were shredded like a fleece of wool,  
 And men, immured for ever from the light,  
 Were starved of water and the meanest fare,  
 Netted like birds, hung in the festering sun,  
 Scourged till the quivering weals of ravaged flesh  
 Oozed blood and sweat together, thrown to beasts  
 Like offal from a reeking shambles, maimed  
 And seared, and blinded with malignant rage  
 By those whose power the breath of freedom blew  
 Into oblivion like a wisp of smoke  
 That drifts against the edges of a gale,  
 We stood opposed to bigots and their sway,  
 And brake the sword of selfish dominance.  
 And, since so often in the hideous past,  
 We stood together, fronting evil days,  
 Like yon broad mountain that the lightnings smite,  
 And the storms rend for ever, on whose face,  
 After the violent tillage of the years,  
 Shines yet the sweet assurance of the dawn,

Let us clasp hands to help the world again,  
And ease the anguish of her ceaseless pain.

## VI

At last we mete the stature of our race.  
Compact and whole,  
Awake in brain and soul,  
Each lifts him from his ineffectual place,  
Where lately shadows of disgrace  
Blotted the sunlight from his face,  
And chilled his feet to use a sullen pace.  
Towards the hills again we lift our eyes.  
There on the heights we see another goal,  
And waiting to be won, a greater prize  
Than any we had reached before.  
We feel another sense, a wider law  
Guides us along the peaceful way,  
Rich with the triumphs that accrue  
When homely labour wakes the day,  
And, shaking down the morning dew  
From seeded grass and flowery spray,  
Goes out into the pregnant field  
To gather or assist the yield.  
We see the burning desert blush  
To beauty, and we see the rush  
Of water o'er the scant karoo,  
Where harsh and wizened herbage grew,

And torrid winds were wont to blow,  
Piling up drifts of sand instead of snow.

## VII

Let us take hands together here at last,  
Let us clasp hands across long leagues of veld,  
And may the love within our hearts be felt  
Even in the fervour of a grip so fast,  
No burning recollection of the past  
Will loose it, and no heats of passion melt  
Our new-cemented brotherhood ; how vast,  
When the glad morning swings his golden belt  
Of light athwart the world, gleam in the sky  
The splendours of a cloudy continent,  
Fulfilled of the dawn's peace, and grace and power,  
So too will this fair Africa be high,  
And bright, and strong from this millennial hour  
Wherein old hate dies in new love's content.

## VIII

And we the latest born of all her daughters,  
In the great years to come  
Will not be dumb  
When she, sole mistress of the roaring waters,  
Whose gift of freedom brought us  
Out of the tangle of our own mistrust,  
Calls on our needed aid  
To stand beside her in the battle-dust ;



Nor be afraid,  
 Nor selfishly endeavour to evade  
 The wider duty for a rooted lust  
 Of power still unchastened by the years.  
 Yea ! though the future bring  
 Seasons of lean accomplishment, and fears  
 Destroy our hopes like fires that foil the spring,  
 And spread a mourning mantle o'er the earth,  
 We will not fail,  
 Marching as men through desolation's dearth,  
 By rugged hill and vale,  
 In patient pilgrimage,  
 To reach at last the heights where England towers,  
 Holding aloft the flag of freedom ; high  
 Above the fretful rage  
 And futile opposition of the powers,  
 That know the why  
 Of her great strength, but will not learn thereby.

## IX

Now let the trumpets blare  
 Their sweet, glad music through the crystal air !  
 Unfurl the banners to the genial sky,  
 And in this deep dug grave  
 Let us be brave  
 To bury where no vision may descry  
 The smallest record of the foolish past,  
 That so at last—



Unmindful of the thoughts that fostered hate—  
 We may encourage a diviner fate,  
 And move along  
 Unto the music of a joyous song,  
 While all the banners wave,  
 And the great trumpets blare  
 Their sweet, glad music through the crystal air.  
 Sing, sing with joy around this happy grave,  
 Where all the past lies dead,  
 While future triumphs beckon us ahead.

## X

Above the night where all the hills are clear,  
 Where not a shadow falls, nor any tear,  
 And no one shivers in the grip of fear,  
                                   Above the night !

Above the darkness of our low desires,  
 Where all the soul yearns upward and aspires,  
 And feels no more the sting of earthly fires,  
                                   Above the night !

Above the fevers of our wasting hours,  
 Where all the land is full of fragrant flowers,  
 And o'er the dawn no cloudy darkness lowers,  
                                   Above the night !

Above these jarring voices into peace,  
Where every season brings a sure increase,  
And wheat is garnered with the snowy fleece,  
Above the night !

Guide us, O Lord ! along the quiet ways  
That lead where justice suffers no delays,  
And unto Thee for ever be the praise  
Above the night !

## MAÍRIN

Bow your heads  
All ye common-thinking men !  
Here's a soul whose presence sheds  
Light as when  
From the east a glory spreads,  
And we see the rosy flower of the dawn unfold again.

Her sweet eyes  
Smile like waters in a dream  
That reflect unfathomed skies,  
And the gleam  
Of such moonlight mysteries  
As elude us in the glamour of some wood-encharmed  
stream.

And her face  
Is delicious laughter's shrine,  
Where joy sparkles to replace  
Thoughts that pine,  
Like young flowers in a space  
Where no dew may fall at even, and by day no light  
may shine.

Thoughts she has  
That are pure and sweet as light,  
When through all the radiant grass

Keen delight  
Of the flowering dawn doth pass,  
And the day draws rosy curtains round the chambers  
of the night.

Where she is,  
Summer riches bloom and reign,  
Scents of rose and clematis  
Breathe again,  
Zephyrs waft their store of bliss  
Soothing softly into comfort all the brows that throb  
with pain.

Since she rose  
Like a star serene and bright,  
All the earth with wonder glows,  
For such light  
From her magic presence flows  
That all sorrows veil their faces and go softly out  
of sight.

The moon gleams  
And I see her lovely form,  
Clothed in those enchanting beams,  
White and warm,  
Haunting all my sinless dreams  
Like a lily bravely lighting all the darkness of a  
storm.

Tranced deep  
Like some lover overwrought  
By love visions in his sleep,  
I am caught  
Unto blissful heights that keep  
All my spirit pure and single to the levels of her  
thought.

## MUSIC

HILL grasses waving red  
Sing on the mountain head,  
And thus  
For us  
Is music's volume fed ;

Music that from the hills  
Falls with those crystal rills  
Whose veins  
The rains  
Swell into dulcet thrills ;

Music that o'er the edge  
Of some wind-curling ledge  
Doth wing  
To sing  
Soft through the quivering sedge ;

That fills the poppy's breath  
With languid hints of death,  
Till themes  
For dreams  
Possess her drowsy wraith ;

Sweet notes that trill and shake  
Where babbling waters slake  
    The grass  
    And pass  
To where the meadows bake ;

Music the seas outpour  
When all their breakers roar,  
    And curl  
    To hurl  
Their might along the shore ;

That ripples on the beach  
With lilt of joyous speech,  
    When all  
    The squall  
Is past our listening reach ;

Music the raindrops make  
When on a windless lake  
    They fall  
    And all  
Their winking jewels break ;

That o'er thuriferous heights  
Wings its clear silver flights  
    When rain  
    Again  
Sings what the flower delights ;

Music that from the cells  
 Of swaying flower-bells,  
     Will sing  
     To bring  
 The bees into her spells ;

That when the world is green,  
 From rapturous throats unseen,  
     By sheaves  
     Of leaves  
 Hid in a cloistral screen,

Sends through the sultry trees  
 Her song of summer ease,  
     So sweet  
     The heat  
 Throbs into harmonies ;

That in a gentler mood  
 Coos through the magic wood,  
     To tell  
     How well  
 Love is with song endued ;

That reaches gladder heights  
 When all the vernal lights  
     Begin  
     To spin  
 Their garment of rare sights ;



Music that helps the soul  
To seize her lost control  
    Of sense,  
    Till thence  
Light shows th' abandoned goal ;

And that when sorrows press  
Unlocks its tenderness,  
    To mend  
    And end  
Life's long enduring stress.

## BALLAD OF NERO

WHERE'S Nero with his double chin,  
His rusty beard and vinous lips  
That sucked the breath of Hades in,  
And uttered many wanton quips ?  
Where are the awful games he planned,  
That ached through such tremendous fears,  
Men's faces laughed whose lives were banned ?  
All's covered by the dusty years.

Where is he with his septic skin,  
That oozed disease from sloughing tips  
Of ulcers grown from seeds of sin ?  
Where are his bloody tricks, the whips  
That never ceased to scourge his land ?  
Where are his tridents, nets and spears,  
With which the bravest were unmanned ?  
All's covered by the dusty years.

Where are his ghoulish eyes, wherein  
Vile visions rioted, like ships  
Of demons through some murky din ?  
Where are his gory moods ? His slips  
Down reeking slopes ? The fiery brand  
That flared to light his peoples' tears ?  
The fearful lusts he woke and fanned ?  
All's covered by the dusty years.

## ENVOY

Ah, princess mine ! this dune of sand  
Whereon each struggling soul uprears  
Its tower of dreams, can never stand.  
All's covered by the dusty years.

## AT IZELI

HERE when the warm days come  
An angel hath her home,  
And where her white feet move  
Life leaps to light, and love  
Forgets the cold.

Close round her drooping eaves  
The vine uncurls its leaves,  
And the red lips of day  
Kiss every budding spray  
To fire and gold.

Peace like the peace of skies  
When the white evening lies,  
As in a dream of rest,  
Against the windless west,  
Is in her eyes.

Her hands are like soft wings;  
And round her feet the spring's  
Glad grasses wash and wave,  
And dewy rushes lave  
Her ankle-rings.

Her flower-soft gown that droops  
From where her lithe neck stoops  
When summer bows her head,  
Hath bands of various thread  
Caught in gold loops,

And from its viewless seams  
 The scent of vernal dreams  
 Shakes itself out, and flows  
 Round her as round a rose  
     Rose odour teems.

Held up in warm sweet light  
 Her palms are pink and white,  
 Like roses washed in milk;  
 And all her hair's soft silk  
     Is amber bright.  
 From her sweet breathing lips,  
 Sweet as whence honey drips,  
 A sound of rapturous notes  
 Comes, as from singing throats  
     Glad music slips.

Through all her nights and days  
 She walks in flowery ways ;  
 Where warm white waters run,  
 Breathing against the sun  
     Her footstep strays ;  
 The winds of dawn are sweet  
 That blow from where her feet,  
 Sandalled with silver shoes,  
 Have touched the scented dew  
     Before the heat.

The light of long warm hours  
 Distils into her flowers,  
 And all their wakening veins  
 Get from slow-falling rains  
     And twinkling showers  
 All colours of magic fires,  
 Born of her soul's desires ;  
 In her enchanted glades  
 Never a soft bud fades  
     Or droops or tires.

Under her green-roofed trees  
 She lies for noontide ease,  
 Hearing, as one in sleep  
 Hears while the reapers reap,  
     The hum of bees.  
 Shed petals of white flowers  
 Strew all her leafy bowers,  
 Or on the slow-drawn tide  
 Like down-soft feathers glide  
     Through windless hours.

For her the glad birds call,  
 The dawns are musical,  
 And through the sunwashed skies  
 For her the butterflies  
     Like petals fall.

In the still fervid noon  
She gives her soul for boon  
To flowers and fragile things  
That have thin gauze for wings,  
Lest any swoon.

When the first filmy light  
Ambers the wings of night,  
All her green mountains flush,  
And every fragrant bush  
Sparkles delight ;  
Softly at eve she goes  
From lily bud to rose,  
And at a touch they bloom,  
And in the silver gloom  
Their hearts uncloze.

Under her full-orbed reign  
She sees wide fields of grain  
Roll out along the wind  
Heavy with gold, or thinned  
By frozen rain,  
Or 'neath mimosa boughs,  
Domed like a golden house,  
Close knots of panting sheep,  
And by still pools asleep  
Noon-drowsy cows.

She in her garden's round  
Is life, and light and sound ;  
All swift desires are hers,  
And the first vein that stirs  
    Beneath the ground.

But when her feet stray forth  
Life fades, and love and mirth,  
And all the green days droop  
What time her swallows troop  
    For cold and dearth.



## THE FORSAKEN GARDEN

AH ! sweet were the days, and the nights and the  
showers,

In the garden we loved that is now a waste,  
Where rank weeds strangle the helpless flowers,  
And the paths are choked, and the beds defaced,  
And the vines hang loose from the wall, displaced  
By wild wet weather and wrecking storms,  
And the mould is riddled by restless worms.

Ah ! sweet were the days, and the nights and the  
apples,

In the garden we loved that is now undone,  
Where the light sheds twinkling globes and dapples  
As it filters through from the glaring sun,  
And the grass is pierced by the field rat's run,  
And the drouth hath withered the trees, and the fruit  
Gets no more life from the shrivelled root.

Ah ! sweet were the days, and the nights and the  
guavas,

In the garden we loved that neglect hath spoiled,  
Where the clods are harder than hard-baked lavas,  
And the net hangs rent where the spider toiled,  
And the snake lies close in the rose bush coiled,  
And the soothing sap of the spring is dry  
That moved last year when the sun rode high.

Ah ! sweet were the days, and the nights and the  
peaches

In the garden we loved that is all but dead,  
Where soft light gleamed on the soft green reaches,  
And the singing world was assoiled of dread,  
And dawn scents blew from the violet bed,  
And all things lovely, and sweet and rare  
Trembled and glowed in the balmy air.

Ah ! sweet were the days and the nights and the  
roses,

In the garden we loved that is now forlorn,  
And sweet as the scent of a flower that closes,  
When the pale light fades and the night is born,  
So sweet was the breeze from the tossing corn  
That rippled our hair with its odorous breath  
Or ever we dreamed of this garden of death.

## SUMMER DAWN

MAIDEN-MODEST morn,  
Clear and cool and sweet,  
Out of darkness born  
Like the golden wheat  
That o'er the dull black mould rolls like a billowing  
sheet.

Blowing fields of grass,  
Lush and dewy bright,  
Open and amass,  
Shadows break to light,  
While day with speeding shafts puts all the stars to  
flight.

O'er the waking sky  
Changing colour streams,  
And soft breezes sigh  
Just awoke from dreams,  
To shepherd little clouds that fear the noonday  
beams.

From the mountain top  
Through a veil of gold,  
Swooping eagles drop  
Till their wings unfold  
And lift them free again into their native cold.

Hares with spangled ears  
Which the light shines through,  
Till each tip appears  
Like a flame in dew,  
Gambol with noiseless mirth, nor fear the open view.

Where the water lies,  
Cool from yesternight,  
Rainbow-tinted flies  
Flicker into sight,  
Or poise on viewless wings and quiver with delight.

Every grassy vlei  
Is alight with flowers  
That adore the day,  
While the morning hours  
Heavy with laden sweets, await the noonday  
showers.

Filmy shreds of mist  
Cling about the hills,  
Pale as amethyst  
That a rose light fills,  
And softer than the down wherein a young bird  
thrills.

Down the mountain side  
Dance the little streams,

Singing as they glide  
(Ah, the airy themes !)  
Of crystal pools above that nurse the lily's dreams.

Little shaded ponds  
Show the graceful ferns  
All their dripping fronds  
Glassed in lucid urns,  
Whereon no ripple moves, or purling eddy turns.

All the slopes are bright  
With the ardent bees,  
Each impetuous sprite,  
Dreaming not of ease,  
Hurries, and dives and rolls through ravished  
nectaries.

Now the partridge calls  
From the rosy height,  
And the waterfalls  
With his voice unite,  
Two crystal songs of joy that mingle their delight.

All the dawn is glad  
With tempestuous song,  
Birds that never had  
Any sense of wrong  
Are gathered to rejoice in one exultant throng.

Loud the music pours  
From each glowing tree,  
Falls, and swings and soars,  
And with its melody  
Thrills all the living world into an ecstasy.

All the glowing earth,  
All the radiant sky  
Ring with careless mirth,  
Shout, and thrill with glee,  
And the enamoured world awakes to harmony.

## SALVATION JANE

LET us go down, O heart, into the deep,  
The black slush levels where the wretched sleep,  
And heavy odoured poisons breathe and creep  
    Along the sweating walls,  
Let us go down where little children's skins  
Are sloughed away for all their father's sins,  
Yellow and wrinkled as when frost begins  
    And tettered leafage falls ;

Where reeking dens are choked with sodden forms,  
Close as a carcase with its seething worms,  
That riot blindly into knotted swarms,  
    And roll, and slip and coil,  
Where unimaginable horrors rage,  
And men enjoy not any heritage  
Of air, or light, or comfort to assuage  
    Their weariness of toil ;

Where the poor mother with her milkless breast  
Moans o'er her starving babe, and cannot rest  
For the cold fear that irks her ; where the best  
    Have not the souls of beasts ;  
Let us go down where heaven is not a dream,  
Nor hell a fear for all its lurid gleam  
Shed on them mindless ; where the fetid stream  
    Froths with polluting yeasts ;

Where men are like a stagnant pool that breeds  
 All nature's bale of slimy filth, and feeds  
 Innumerable broods of deadly seeds,  
     Mildews and charnel damps,  
 And vile miasmas, like the breath of pits  
 Choked with corruption, where mad passion hits  
 With random stroke, and in blaspheming fits  
     Men curse their gnarling cramps ;

Where lewdness unabashed, and lust abide,  
 And ravenous hunger with his hollow side  
 Dreams of a feast, and wakes all wistful eyed,  
     Where nothing is but dearth,  
 Or garbage, and such dry and sateless food  
 As worms eke out of logs of rotted wood,  
 And men are sunk into a sullen mood  
     For want of wholesome mirth ;

Let us go down, O heart, nor be afraid,  
 God being with us, let us not evade  
 His sole desire that we should bring the strayed  
     Back to the narrow path ;  
 Sharp thorns are better than the ease they have ;  
 Thorns on the way until they reach the grave  
 Will bloom beyond its portals ; let us save  
     All who have earned His wrath.



He gave His life, His pure immaculate heart  
 Endured the railers of the street and mart ;  
 All agonies were crowded in His part,

    All tortures, all despairs ;  
 For these, O heart, for these so vile and low,  
 His delicate being trod the path of woe ;  
 Immortal love endured the sundering throe  
 To make them sons and heirs.

O heart, remember He is here to-day,  
 He moves us ; He upholds us on the way ;  
 Let us be eager, anxious for the fray  
 Against His tireless foes ;  
 His foes and ours ; and ah, we would not fail  
 In love and service to assist the frail ;  
 He stooped to lift them, perished to prevail ;  
 And as a spiced wind blows

Fragrant with odours from a land of light,  
 So round the world for ever day and night  
 His tender spirit breathes, annulling spite  
 And hate and viler sins.

And we, O heart, would waft that healing balm  
 Into the fetid gutters, till all harm  
 Soothes into blessing, and the exultant psalm  
 Drowns all these earthly dins.

## A MANY MAIDS

SWEET, there be some whose lustrous eyes  
Draw love into their paradise,  
And some there be whose rosy lips  
Make him destroy his jewelled ships,  
Others whose fairer skins entice  
Hot worship of their breasts of ice,  
Whose siren voices unwithstood  
Poison the channels of his blood ;  
Some whose calm brows love cannot see  
But straight he bows his gallant knee,  
Whose faces make him dream of God,  
And see the path the martyrs trod ;  
And some whose regal beauties shine  
Till they abash his amorous eyne,  
Whose lissom bodies drag him down  
To haunt the taverns of the town ;  
And there be some that give him grace  
To feel his shame and veil his face ;  
Some whose frail fingers quench his fire,  
And tune for him a fairy lyre,  
Whose music through enchanted hours  
Sings like a bee among the flowers ;  
And some whose golden nets of hair  
Hold him a drooping captive there ;  
Some in whose service he will go

Where all the demons work him woe ;  
Let all these pass, for yet I find  
More beauty in the sun and wind,  
In nature's moods a deeper sense  
Of that divine intelligence  
That wakes the lily where she sleeps  
In the cold ooze of glassy deeps,  
And in the fretted minds of men  
Puts yearnings for a wider ken.

## BELOW AUGHRABIES

I HAD a dream of travel ; on a day  
When shimmering fire swathed the iron roofs,  
And scarlet flowers flamed along the kloofs,  
Hot with the whole of summer, far away  
I saw between two boulder knotted cones  
A road now seldom trodden down by hoofs,  
And lonely as a track bestrewn with bones.

Like a red ribbon stretching through the haze,  
With many a sinuous turn and sudden dip  
It wound along, and passed a hanging lip  
Of polished rock that quivered in the blaze,  
Like some huge carcase swollen out of shape  
Then through a sandy waste I saw it slip,  
With ragged sluits on either side agape.

There where it passes through the sweltering neck  
It looks as raw and gruesome as a cut  
Made in coarse flesh ; and every shapeless rut  
Is like a sanguine smudge across a deck  
Where blood interprets silence, giving form  
To horrors that were here endured to glut  
The insatiate fever of a passion storm.

Beyond the hills in that mysterious west  
Whereto the sun for ever journeys down,  
Is there not also, though all nature frown,

A guerdon that will bloom to crown the quest  
Essayed to reach the secret of those skies  
Whose fierce refulgence burns the desert brown,  
And stings all nature into agonies ?

May one not find in all that arid tract,  
Where sand dunes seem to quicken and retreat  
Under the weary tread of aching feet,  
And where dry bushes by the wind are stacked  
In gravelike hummocks all about the plain,  
Which looks as if an army met defeat  
Here, and abandoned all its heaps of slain.

May one not find a sweet white-watered lake  
Filled to the brim with little dancing pleats,  
Whose every pulse with mellow music beats,  
And at whose shores shy desert creatures slake  
Their gloaming thirst ? or yet a little pool  
Fed by a fountain hid in dim retreats  
Where drooping ferns are green, and fresh and cool ?

Or if not these, perchance some rarer thing,  
A wondrous jewel with its soul of light,  
Whose coruscations blaze along the night,  
When the queen moon within her silver ring  
Transmutes the golden flower of the dawn  
Into the frosted lily of the night,  
That shines to make the desert less forlorn ?

A garden full of roses one might see,  
 And luscious fruits as sweet as honey-cells,  
 Lilies in clouds, and flaming flower-bells,  
 All gathered in a plot of greenery ?  
 Maybe the wind that here is like a blast  
 Roaring about these sandy desert swells,  
 Will be less harsh when these bare plains are passed ?

Thus in my dream I mused on the event,  
 But doubtfully, as one who fears his fate,  
 And with reluctant feet goes through a gate  
 Leading to new adventures, so I went  
 With halting steps along the dusty way,  
 Holding within me still a close debate,  
 As if each reason held an equal sway.

Forward I stepped with languid motion ; there  
 Beyond those low black hills that held my gaze,  
 Each one aquiver in the blinding haze,  
 As if it felt the fierce inveterate glare,  
 And longed for cloudy shadows to appear,  
 My hope was to discover smoother ways,  
 And balmier breezes than may wander here.

And though I knew that Hope is but a jade  
 Who holds her tinsel jewels in the sun,  
 That still recede however fast we run ;  
 Yea ! even as rainbows draw away and fade,

Leaving the gloomy sky devoid of light,  
So all Hope's trinkets vanish ; one by one  
They disappear from our expectant sight.

Nathless I turned into the hollow track,  
Walking through flames of air towards the west,  
Nor halted till I reached a barren crest  
Between two stony kopjes ; here, alack !  
The prospect held no better view ; dry sluits  
With store of ragged bushes, seemed the best  
Nature could furnish to assuage her mutes.

For now a ban of silence held the hills,  
And the lone plain, and all the choking vales,  
Audible silence sobbing into wails,  
Sans echo, like the ghostly voice that thrills  
Only the nerves of him attuned to feel  
Its inward murmur ; here no speech avails,  
Nor sound of laughter breaks the dusty seal.

A scurf of salt that made mine eyelids ache  
Shone like a glare of snow beneath a ridge  
That showed a spine of naked rocks on edge ;  
And far away I saw the river break  
Into a misty vapour where it poured  
Between two granite columns, o'er a ledge  
That tore the waters till they fumed and roared.



Thither I bent my steps with sudden haste,  
 And heedless when my feet broke through the crust,  
 Of how the acrid powder rose in dust,  
 Adding a greyness to the silent waste,  
 And biting into every open wound  
 Cut by the wind, as when a poison rust  
 Chars all the living fibres of the ground.

Now the sun dropped towards his wonted rest,  
 And looking back I saw the boulders gleam  
 Like ruddy roses in a giant's dream,  
 Magnificent along each glowing crest  
 Shone the great blooms ; and all the dewless slopes,  
 Where the dry thunders roll, and crash and scream,  
 Flushed into flower like phantasmal hopes ;

Fruitless as those, and scentless ; daily here  
 All the low hills are reaches red with bloom,  
 Whose flowers fade and leave a deeper gloom,  
 That holds the spirit in a spell of fear,  
 And chills the heart until it scarcely throbs.  
 Far down I heard the plunging waters boom,  
 And the dull echoes thicken into sobs.

Beneath the sultry shadow of a rock  
 I stepped at last, and knew my journey done,  
 For thence I saw the waters flash and run,  
 And heard them rush, with immemorial shock



That shivered through the ground on which I stood,  
Under a cavern where no ray of sun  
May ever reach the stealthy stealing flood.

Into a cauldron that the stream had carved  
Out of black granite, grinding ever round  
Sharp flints and rubble here in plenty found,  
The waters plunged, and in midleap were halved,  
Cut by a jutting tooth that held its post  
Though all about it other rocks were ground  
Flush with the lip o'er which the flood was tossed.

Down in the mighty cup a crudded broth,  
With iridescent bubbles foamed and boiled,  
As if beneath it swarthy stokers toiled,  
Feeding a furnace to produce this broth,  
And keep it seething for Apollyon's host ;  
And far below the snaky river coiled,  
Gliding away as strangely as a ghost.

Sometimes a sudden fissure at my feet  
Sent up a cry that sounded like a wail  
From souls who know their pleas will not avail  
Though all their banded legions should repeat  
Aves unceasing with united breath ;  
This was the river moaning in its mail  
Of iron rock, like one who strives with death.

Among the boulders lying all awry,  
 And scored with formless cracks on every side,  
 Stood thorny scrub, and trees that must have died  
 Long ages since, so white they looked and dry,  
 That once enriched the region with their fruits,  
 And graced the landscape with their plummy pride,  
 Dead now and wasted to the very roots.

But all along the eastern slopes, I know  
 The aloes bloom and flourish through the year ;  
 In crowded rocks the hardy prickly pear  
 Fixes its roots, and searches far below  
 For moisture that will plump her angry blades ;  
 All else seems charred to ashes ; out of gear  
 Are nature's works, and futile all her aids.

Now in the fading glamour of the sky  
 I came to where the river's sluggish tide  
 Moved like old Lethê, slow and smooth and wide,  
 And noiseless through the gloom ; expectantly  
 I stood upon the dim and spectral shore,  
 For prescient tremors made my throbbing side  
 Pause on a pulse of unaccustomed awe.

Trembling I stood, and feared to look behind ;  
 The fibres of my being felt the breath  
 Of noisome odours from the vaults of death ;  
 An emanation like a clammy wind

Disturbed the chemic forces of my blood,  
 And as one pales who sees an angry wraith,  
 I paled and faltered in my shaken mood.

Where, in this ominous silence, will I see  
 The fiend, or ghost, or other fearsome sight,  
 Whose presence through the slowly darkening night  
 Exhales an essence full of enmity,  
 And fills me with the dread of those unknown  
 And nameless forces, by whose secret might  
 Reason herself is banished from her throne ?

Scarce had the question budded in my brain,  
 When there before me like a coil of rope  
 Lying involved upon a sandy slope,  
 I saw the naked horror's scaly train  
 Slowly unclothe, and from the middle ring  
 Upreared an ancient head that seemed to grope  
 Blindly about with rhythmic lift and swing.

Is this the very monarch of the pit,  
 Or some belated monster of the prime,  
 Whose form was nurtured in the tepid slime  
 Long aeons since ? the creature seemed no whit  
 Less terrible than those diluvian mounds  
 And hills of flesh, that in uncharted time  
 Floundered and heaved about the lakes and sounds.

From side to side he swayed his crusted head,  
 On which the lichens of unnumbered years  
 Grew like a scurf, and down beside his ears  
 Hung hoary mosses, dry, and sere and dead ;  
 A sweat of horror oozed about my skin  
 To feel his motions slowly soothe my fears—  
 So must the devil soothe the sense of sin.

His eyes that were as dull as molten lead  
 On which a film of cooler metal grows,  
 Were full of sloth, and cunning and old woes ;  
 Yet now they held me in a numbing dread,  
 A fear that seemed to creep along my bones ;  
 I felt like one immersed in arctic snows,  
 Whose rigid body neither breathes nor moans.

Then the froze moment passed, and all his length,  
 Coil after coil dissolving, seemed to fade  
 Into the sultry night's increasing shade.  
 Slowly I woke to feel returning strength  
 Enter my soul, and lying thus awake,  
 I wondered at the journey I had made,  
 And the cold vision of the monstrous snake.

## THE MOUNTAINS

I LEANING in a weary mood of sorrow  
Over the bridge, and gazing on the water,  
Saw rushing waves that leaped, and fumed and  
fretted,  
And reached and clambered in a spiteful fury  
To where against the bank a great mimosa  
Lifted a golden globe into the ether,  
And glowed to feel its roots reft out and floated  
Hither and thither on the foaming current,  
Unconscious in its joy of how the moments  
Were tearing down its hold and place of anchor.  
Even so a man in some wild flush of fortune,  
Moves laughing through a region filled with furies,  
Who smile unseen, and crush the hope he leans on,  
And as he plunges downward into hades,  
Send their fierce pæan raging through the heavens,  
Chanting his doom, and how they wrecked his glory ;  
Saw also all around me in the sunlight,  
The beauty of ripe grass, whose waving vistas  
Were amber rivers winding through the forest,  
And peaceful vales whose silver threads of music  
Came on cool gusts of wind across the meadows,  
And mingled with the deeper voice beneath me,  
As through the resonant roar of rolling breakers  
Sometimes you hear the pipe of birds returning

Out of the storm that booms along the ocean.  
And slowly, while I leaned, the lapsing river,  
And all the sounds that blew about the morning,  
Wrought on my soul, until a deeper music,  
Not often heard by any sense of mortals,  
Came to me from the far off mountain ridges,  
Soft sounds that breathed in pauses, low and tender,  
Like intimations from the lips of spirits,  
Or fervid-thoughted words of earnest lovers,  
When the close evening swoons into the twilight,  
And still their voices, yearning through the silence,  
Interpret feelings that till then they knew not—  
Low liquid sibilations born of fountains,  
And the clear whispers of the fragrant zephyrs,  
That stir with dawn and touch the dewy grasses,  
Until they twinkle like the starry heavens,  
So all their jewels dance and shake together—  
Lo ! thus a voice from all the shaggy ridges,  
And bold brown peaks and gleaming promontories  
And shadowed glens and passes of the mountains,  
Came like a balm into my broken spirit.  
“ Look up and see us in our silent places,  
O ! fevered men with pain upon your eyelids,  
And all about your hearts the fire of sorrow,  
And on your lips the bitter gall of anguish,  
And in your souls most hateful dreams and visions.”  
Then I looked up, for I was one sore troubled  
With biting pain upon my drooping eyelids,

And all about my heart the fire of sorrow  
Burned as a furnace under seething waters  
And on my lips the bitter gall of anguish  
Lay sharp as poison on the fangs of serpents,  
And fearful dreams possessed my stricken spirit.  
And looking up I saw the quiet mountains  
Crowned as with gold, and wearing purple raiment,  
Glow in the sunset, full of peace and fearless,  
Like kings indeed ; then I took heart, and sorrow,  
Anguish, and pain, and hosts of fearful spectres  
Left me at once, and with a cry exultant,  
And heart fulfilled of only nature's comfort,  
I took once more the path that climbed above me,  
Whether to darkness or to light I knew not,  
But with this faith, that still the end is silence,  
And peace, and quiet that no creed can shatter.



## FOR A BABY

## I

BABY of our thought !  
Thou art here at last !  
Out of ether wrought  
Somehow in the past,  
A spirit thou hast come from the unmeasured vast.

The Eternal Mind,  
Brooding on thy state,  
Sent thee to unwind  
Tangled skeins of fate,  
Divine as angels are whose duties round thee wait.

And thy body grew,  
All its parts aright,  
Until born to view  
Here, as from the night,  
A flower is born complete with all its petals white.

Eyes of lustrous blue,  
Grey, or shaded brown,  
Skin of pearly hue,  
Hair of softest down,  
And lashes nursing dreams no older heart hath  
known.



Beaming eyes that smile  
At some lovelier sight  
Than may here beguile  
Aught to such delight,  
For still thy visions flow from some uncharted height.

Ruby lips that glow  
When some sweeter thought  
Than we here may know,  
By the young brain caught,  
Flutters the tiny heart with its first feeling fraught.

Little dimpled hands,  
Cool as morning dew,  
Ere the wetted lands  
Shimmer to the view,  
And ere the shady hours their wonted heat renew.

Tiny twinkling feet  
With their peach-bud toes,  
Each a thing more sweet  
Than sweet scents disclose,  
Awakening keener joys than any flower that grows.

Brows as smooth and pure  
As a dove's white breast,  
For no sins obscure  
Yet what there is best ;  
Thy hopes are still asleep like young birds in their  
nest.

Mouth whose low replies  
 Name delicious things,  
 Baby mysteries  
 Deeper than the spring's  
 Most secret heart conceives of vernal whisperings.

Eyelids lifted wide  
 When the silver moon  
 Hardly seems to glide  
 Where the stars are strewn,  
 A cold white disc that gleams as if from marble  
     hewn.

But from where she broods  
 In the holy night  
 Showers upon the woods  
 Her pale mystic light,  
 And glammers all the earth from vale to iron height.

Joy it is to see  
 Laughter brim thine eyes,  
 Joy to know for thee  
 All are sunny skies,  
 That no old hopes will wake to croon their agonies.

Joy to know that yet  
 Through thy baby years  
 Life with all its fret  
 Of infrozen tears  
 Will have no power to hurt or cow thee with its fears.

And deep joy to feel  
That no callous word,  
Sharp as tempered steel,  
Murderous as a sword,  
Will from those lips outflash that are by thee adored.

That when winds are cold  
Thou wilt surely be  
Wrapped in cosy fold  
On thy mother's knee,  
A dreamer still of dreams from all disaster free.

Ah ! if we could go  
Back to where thou art,  
And with what we know  
Make another start,  
Methinks we might avoid errors of head and heart.

But we may not cheat  
Thus the will of fate ;  
Storms upon us beat,  
Sorrows round us wait,  
And wisdom these induce holds every soul elate.

Goodness only blooms  
When our burning sighs  
Wake it from the glooms  
Where it closely lies,  
Fearing to show its heart here in these frosty skies,

Yet our prayer to heaven  
Is that thou may'st be  
Pure as rain washed even  
When the shadows flee,  
A creature sweet and good through adversity.

## II

Dost thou see God, my baby,  
With those clear eyes ;  
Dost thou see heaven's light shining  
On fields of paradise ?

Dost thou see angels moving  
On holy ways,  
Whose feet have love to guide them  
To where pale sorrow prays ?

Dost thou hear angel voices,  
Most sweet and low,  
Soft harmonies that whisper  
Of things we do not know ?

And do the stars above thee,  
In heaven's wide dome,  
Shine on the path thou camest  
From thy celestial home ?

Dost thou see flower spirits  
 Rejoice at dawn  
 Till all the air is fragrant  
 With their sweet souls upborne ?

Dost thou see fairies peeping  
 With glow-worm eyes,  
 Where ferny shades protect them  
 From over fervid skies ?

Dost thou see magic beauty  
 In white moonbeams,  
 And in the warm green valleys  
 The souls of vernal dreams ?

Doth each dawn's breath advise thee  
 Of what it brings  
 To fill the earth with music  
 That for thy pleasure sings ?

Do all dumb creatures love thee  
 For being so small,  
 Or do they know thy spirit  
 Is not mad passion's thrall ?

Dost thou hear music yearning  
 With those fine ears,  
 Pure notes that sweetly mingle,  
 And ease the night of fears ?

Dost thou hear waters singing  
To leave the heights,  
Songs that field creatures cherish  
For all their cool delights ?

And do the birds beguile thee  
To laughter's grace,  
Till hands outreach to hold them  
And smiles are on thy face ?

Do furry kittens please thee  
With elfish wiles,  
All rolled together playing  
On velvet carpet piles ?

Do cows and oxen breathing  
The sweet of grass,  
Recall the bliss of living  
Where rain-cool breezes pass ?

Do morning winds and evening  
From green hill-heads,  
Flush thy soft cheeks with colour  
Till snow with ruby weds ?

And do the snowy bosoms  
Of white doves gleam  
Upon thy baby vision  
Like lights about a dream ?

What joys are thine to gather,  
What hopes will grow,  
Before the frozen winters  
Upon thy flowers blow ?

Dost thou see God, my baby,  
With those clear eyes,  
And do the angels whisper  
To thee of paradise ?

## LITTLE BABE, WE LOVE THEE

LITTLE babe, we love thee !  
 Little baby, soft as down,  
 On whose face no sorrows frown ;  
 White and pink as roses are ;  
 Cool as light that leaves a star,  
 And into a lily's cup  
 Sends a silver beam to sup  
 Dewy nectar all the night,  
 Till the day unfolds his light,  
 And the little beam must fly  
 To its palace in the sky.

Little babe, we love thee !

Little babe, we love thee !  
 Little baby, sweet as breath  
 Blown across a fragrant wreath ;  
 Ever cooing like a dove :  
 All in answer to our love :  
 Chubby fists and rosy feet,  
 Dewy mouth and all are sweet ;  
 Not a part of thee but makes  
 Merry music for our sakes :  
 In thy pure and sinless eyes  
 Laughs the light of paradise—

Little babe, we love thee !



## JENNY

LITTLE Jenny, not so tall  
As the big chair in the hall,  
Goes with daddy to the kraal.

She would catch the silky goats  
With the soft bells at their throats,  
And the lambs with snowy coats.

Through the choking dust she goes,  
Powdered thick from head to toes,  
Yet her face with rapture glows.

Chasing this one—chasing all,  
Till they leap upon the wall  
Leaving her an empty kraal.

Then her glee at what she's done  
Wreathes her little face with fun,  
And she makes her daddy run ;

Following him with shrill alarms,  
Till he leaps and spreads his arms,  
Metamorphosed by her charms

Into ostrich, mouse or cat,  
Or an ugly wrinkled bat,  
“ Making faces ” through his hat.

Now the angry nurse appears  
Calling Jenny, O, the tears !  
O, the cries her daddy hears !

## BABY, SEE

BABY, see the moon !  
Baby looks,  
Coos a baby tune  
Never found in books.

Baby, see the stars !  
Baby's eyes  
Peep through trellis bars  
At the spangled skies.

Baby, see the flowers !  
Baby's mirth,  
Less restrained than ours,  
Bubbles into birth.

Baby, see the rain !  
Baby's hand  
Patters on the pane  
Where the bright drops land.

Baby, hear the stream !  
Baby's face  
Softens to a dream  
Of unearthly grace.

Baby, hear the birds !  
Baby hears,  
Deaf to human words,  
Songs unused to fears.

Baby, hear the breeze !  
Baby's head  
Bends towards the trees  
Whence the whispers spread.

Baby, hear the world !  
Baby crows !  
Flowers just uncurled  
Never dream of snows.

## ANIMA

I AM the wind that labours still  
To cleanse the world of all disease ;  
I am the sunlight on the hill,  
The moonlight bloom of memories.

I am the night whose velvet wing  
Lies gently on your bleeding woes ;  
And I that small and perfect thing  
The vermeil petal of a rose.

I am the cold that covers death,  
From me are heat's elations sprung ;  
I am the spirit's secret breath ;  
Through me the ancient years are young.

I am the spectre of your fears,  
The hope that sparkles out of doubt ;  
The bitter waters of your tears  
Through me for ever filter out.

I am the cloud that's darkly hung,  
Shot through with lurid streams of fire,  
From my omnific hand outflung  
To chasten all malign desire.

I am the hate that freezes love,  
The love that in the end shall wing  
The very shafts of hate, to prove  
My bounds encompass everything.

I am the byssus spun to hold  
The fragile creatures of the deep,  
And I the towering wave, outrolled  
To carve the boulders from the steep.

I am the smallest thing there is,  
Electric ashlar build me up,  
And when their circles touch and kiss  
Joy quivers in my golden cup.

I am the lowest rung of all,  
Essential matter undisguised,  
Yet greatest in the cosmic hall  
Where all creations are devised.

I am the present and the past ;  
Without me nothing was, or is,  
Or will be ; I am first and last,  
The quenchless fire of bale and bliss.

## THE MOON

POETS behold thee with enraptured gaze,  
 And all thy beauty in embalming verse  
 Preserve for ever ; lovers love the rays  
 That weave enchantment when the clouds disperse,  
 And change familiar objects, daily seen,  
 Into the merest dream of what they are,  
 Until the eye is cheated into sight

Of visions that have been  
 Asleep in thee since as a burning star  
 Thy life drained out into the frozen night.

Most deftly dost thou draw the silver sheen  
 Of ghostly robes around the ancient earth,  
 To clothe with magic every common scene  
 Till beauty breathes into a gauzy birth,  
 Now in a sudden lustre seen to rise,  
 And now to vanish as a spectre might,  
 So fast the drowsy brain is puzzled deep

By all thy sorceries,  
 And deems thee still a queen whose fairy sprite  
 Glides on a dream into the land of sleep.

Queen of cool nights and dewy spangled hours,  
 That swing their fragrant censers in the breeze,  
 And fill the gemmy phials of the flowers  
 With golden nectar for the vestal bees ;







Dost thou still hear those thunder-throated strains  
 That never cease his tameless love to urge,  
 Who, yearning upward with each globing wave,  
     All other love disdains  
 Because for thee in every heaving surge  
 He feels the pain that holds him still thy slave ?

Nay, thou art dead, O ! silver-sheeted ghost !  
 Long ages since thy spirit drew away  
 Like some pale mist that leaves a lonely coast  
 And, slowly fading, dies into the day ;  
 In heaven perchance a lovely vision soars  
 Of thy white soul from fostering travail free,  
 Where spirits see thee who on earth were led,  
     Resting their weary oars,  
 By deep resilient tremors of the sea,  
 To know how love thy punctual vigils fed.

## A SPRING MORNING

MELODIOUS mornings greet me when  
I pass beyond the haunts of men,  
Into the hills yet cool and sweet  
With dews that have not felt the heat,  
Where clarion voices call and sing,  
And all the veld is glad with spring.

Sharp through the rosy coloured skies  
The partridge makes the echoes rise,  
And with his silver-fluted voice  
Gathers his comrades to rejoice,  
Till all the coverts thrill with glee  
To dawn's delirious minstrelsy.

Pale shoots the night hath given birth  
Throw off their little mounds of earth,  
And reaching softly forth to light,  
Begin to leave their winter night,  
Where in the cold their starving veins  
Stirred to the music of the rains.

I see the wetted mountain heads  
Burnished with silver, and the threads  
Of little streams that dance and shoot  
O'er many a storm uncovered root,

And where they wrinkle o'er a stone  
A bunch of bubbles deftly blown.

High up the iron ridges gleam  
Black in the sun ; white vapours stream  
Trailing along the lower spurs  
And sheets of shimmering gossamers  
Gleam here and there like frosted glass  
Through which I vaguely see the grass.

And sheep now-shorn begin to graze  
In closing circles through the haze,  
White as the young moon curving slow  
Down through the dim green afterglow,  
Or like a field of lilies, swayed  
By winds the falling dews delayed.

The murmur of innumerable bees  
Hums over waves of perfumed seas,  
Pranked with the fluttering light of flowers  
That love the young unheated hours,  
And to the radiant day repeat  
The dreams that keep their odours sweet.

In shady kloofs where waters run  
That are not seen of moon or sun,  
Grow modest ferns that love the cool  
Unwindy corners of the pool,

And though they see no rosy heights  
They to themselves are lovelier sights.

Such dawns to me bring more than all  
The dainties of a festival,  
The inner spirit moved yet still  
O'er-flies the world's inveterate ill,  
And in the pure delights of sense  
Feels pulses of omnipotence.

## THE MARTYR

I WILL not flinch ;  
Though all the savage furies of the pit  
Tear me with cruel talons, inch by inch,  
And though fate's minions in their maniac fit  
Shake my good purpose freely, I will go  
Smiling to meet the most disastrous woe,  
Closely in manhood's majesty arrayed ;  
I will not faint in this unhonoured fight  
Wherein men battle for what seemeth right,  
So I resolve to-night  
And dare not flinch.

I know the pinch  
Of adverse fortune, how from hour to hour  
The canker frets, as doth a hungry finch  
Into the fruit whose heart he would devour.  
I know the voids through which the lonely soul  
Must journey, and I know the rugged way  
That climbs and dips towards the hidden goal,  
Obstructed with the refuse of decay  
And bones of men long dead, who with delight  
Essayed to reach some white and shining height,  
But fell to darkest night,  
Yet I'll not flinch.

## ON THE MORNING SIDE OF NIGHT

ON the morning side of night,  
When the stars are growing dim,  
And the sagging moon is white  
On the dusk horizon's rim,  
There are visions that affright,  
Pallid shapes that sway and swim,  
Lolling in the opal mist,  
Limp as corpses in a stream,  
That the waters roll and twist,  
Lift until their faces gleam,  
Coldly by the moonlight kist,  
Each a wraith that haunts a dream.

There are voices calling low  
Through the slowly shifting gloom,  
Silken sighs that slip and flow  
All about a field of doom,  
Echoes of the brooding woe  
Heard when cannon cease to boom,  
And the blood is oozing red  
Into slipping sands beneath,  
Where the men in staring dread  
Quiver to the touch of death,  
Turning on their sodden bed  
For a simple ease of breath.

There are little clouds that shun  
Open day's assauling heat,  
Cooling where their shadows run  
In the wake of vernal feet,  
Budding babies of the sun,  
Born to make the season sweet ;  
Softly in a soundless swoon  
O'er the purple hills they go,  
White as when the maiden moon  
Shines on windless drifts of snow,  
Hasting from the torrid noon  
That would melt them in its glow.

There are spirits leaving earth  
Now the greater light is near,  
Who have watched a secret birth  
Into some translucent sphere  
Where a deeper sense of mirth  
Laughs the anguish out of fear.  
There are little winds that blow  
From the dewy mountain plain,  
Laving all the earth below,  
Where the choking night hath lain,  
Heavy as a pall of woe  
On a soul distraught with pain.



There are songs the muses sing,  
Sweet as echoes heard to fall  
When the shaken harebells swing  
Gently to the zephyr's call,  
And the fervid throats of spring  
Make the morning musical ;  
There be lapsing waters then,  
Cool with starbeams shining clear,  
For delight of weary men  
Whose uneven spirits veer  
Like the lights about a fen  
In the broken gusts of fear.

On the morning side of night  
When the sun is on the roofs,  
And his flashing beams of light  
Overbrim the darkest kloofs,  
Striking from each craggy height  
Sparks that follow charging hoofs ;  
There are joys that leap and shout,  
Blithesome laughter of the crowd,  
Birds in chorus all about,  
Singing softly, singing loud,  
While the darkness filters out  
From each sun-discovered cloud.

## RONDEAU

## I

BE sad, O ! heart, when day appears  
 Unleashing hosts of petty fears,  
 When dewless light is in the sky,  
 And all the fields are harsh and dry  
 And hot beneath a sun that sears,  
     When dust congeals unbidden tears,  
     And drought shakes down the withered pears,  
     And leaves are shrivelled all awry,  
         Be sad, O ! heart !  
 When all the dreary prospect wears  
 A languor due to rainless years ;  
 When pulsing hazes hurt the eye,  
 And tender grasses shrink and die,  
 And wheat hangs down its wilted ears,  
         Be sad, O ! heart.

## II

Rejoice, sad heart, when stars are forth,  
 And moonbeams drape the drowsy earth,  
 When all the hills like opals glow,  
 And sleeping trees forget to grow,  
 And night unlocks the gates of birth,

When grasses rest from burning dearth,  
And shadows have no cooling worth,  
And waters hardly seem to flow,

Rejoice, sad heart !

When winds no longer vex the firth  
And hushed are all the songs of mirth,  
Before the eastern headlands show  
A gleam that wakes the world below,  
Ere sleep unwinds her poppy girth,

Rejoice, sad heart !

## THE MOUNTAIN FAIRIES

WE lie in the shade of a young grass blade,  
Where the light is green and cool,  
And all the noontide we rest by the side  
Of an undiscovered pool.

We are here and there like motes in the air,  
And down with the dancing rills,  
Each merrily glides till the bubbling tides  
Smooth out as they leave the hills.

We are flickering lights on the dew-drenched heights  
Whenever the dawn appears;  
And our sweet flower bells from their lucent wells  
Shed nectar instead of tears.

In our secret garden where no frosts harden,  
And never a wind is cold,  
There are flowers inwrought with bright colours  
    caught  
From silver and fire and gold.

There are little rills, and their water spills  
Right over a diamond ledge,  
And it rests beneath in a circling wreath  
Of feathery ferns and sedge.

We hide in the cell of a mountain bell,  
 And dance in the arum's light ;  
 On the sunbird's back we follow the track  
 Of bees in their outward flight.

In the soft pink mesh of a mushroom's flesh  
 We cling like a swarm of bees ;  
 And we sip the dew as it filters through,  
 Or falls from the shaken trees.

In the aloe blooms we have scented rooms  
 For guests from the higher ridges,  
 And they nestle there till the fervid air  
 Grows cool enough for the midges.

When the pearl of heaven is brighter even  
 Than all the planets that shine,  
 We gather up dreams in her magic beams  
 To strow on our children's eyne.

When the night-jar curves, and circles and swerves  
 Like fumes from a wizard's broth,  
 In a soothing swoon she moves to the tune  
 We sing for a drowsy moth.

When the wild cat spits in her angry fits,  
 And ruffles her hair like wire,  
 We're teasing her skin with a viewless pin,  
 And laughing to see her ire.

When the rhebok dreams that she hears the screams  
Of eagles seizing her fawn,  
'Tis our impish train bemusing her brain  
With fears for a thing unborn.

When the young birds cheep in a helpless heap  
And no one answers their cries,  
We have hidden the nest for a harmless jest  
By charming their mother's eyes.

When a mortal treads our emerald meads,  
We open his eyes with fire,  
And he feels again in his throbbing brain  
The pulse of a pure desire.

His soul grows stronger with us the longer  
He lives on this flowery height,  
His brows unwrinkle, his glad eyes twinkle,  
And he sees through a clearer light.

We are friends of all on this shining ball,  
And pray for their health and rest ;  
But nevertheless (since we must confess)  
We love the children best.

## THE OLD HORSE

LONELY, and old, and drooping  
I see thee stand,  
Whose neck was once a crescent  
That loved the soothing hand,

Whose mighty heart grew tender  
When she drew near,  
Because her voice was gentle,  
Her touch devoid of fear—

She whose small hands caressed thee  
With childish glee,  
And filled thy soul for ever  
With one sweet memory—

Who when the children frolicked  
About thy feet,  
Moved with a tender caution  
For things so soft and sweet ;

Whose nostrils smoked at morning  
When frost was keen,  
And all the valley sparkled  
Like some enchanted scene ;

Who when the days were balmy  
And blue skies beamed  
Stood knee deep in the pasture  
With heavy lids and dreamed ;

And who when storms of summer  
From black clouds burst,  
And torrents fumed and thundered  
While nature slaked her thirst,

Flew from the barren mountain  
To where, branch torn,  
The great mimosas laboured  
Not to be overborne ;

Who when the hunt was eager,  
And springbok flew  
Like birds across the roadway  
That famished hawks pursue,

Stood staunch though every muscle  
Was tense as wire,  
While from thy back the master  
Leaned low to aim and fire.

Or on the dewy upland  
With flowers aglow,  
And sweet with odours blowing  
Whence man may never know,



Pricked up an ear to gather  
Blithe songs that came  
Up through the deep warm valleys  
From birds with souls aflame ;

And when the cannon bellowed  
Had eyes wide set,  
Aglow to see the carnage  
That made the red field wet,

Whose flanks were then aqriver,  
And plashed with foam,  
And whose broad breast plunged forward  
To drive the great charge home ;

Now thy grey head is dreamless,  
Thy limbs are stark,  
And slowly round thee gathers  
The deep, eternal dark.

Lonely, and old, and drooping  
I see thee stand,  
Whose neck was once a crescent  
That loved the soothing hand.

## WHEN

WHEN through the dark I hear the fall  
Of waters sweetly musical,  
When stars like winking jewels peep  
Above a world returned to sleep,  
And o'er the hills a veil of light  
Comes softly flowing through the night,  
Then aeons of old time are less  
Than just a moment's happiness.

When through a garden scented sweet  
I loiter with adoring feet,  
And eyes that love the flowers so,  
They blush into a warmer glow,  
Each breathing all its soul away  
Into the balmy air of day,  
Then life's vicissitudes assume  
The fragrance of a sweet perfume.

When from a mountain top alone  
I see the season's vernal zone  
Run gleaming over vale and hill,  
When mists come up and softly fill  
Each wooded kloof and dewy hollow,  
And winds waft in the wayward swallow,  
Then all the universe to me  
Is but a thought's epitome.

When from his bald and windy height  
 The eagle sweeps into the light,  
 And curving out in viewless rings  
 Holds all the earth beneath his wings,  
 And from his azure vantage sees  
 The summer's tossing revelries,  
 Then all our sordid frets and schemes  
 Drift by like insubstantial dreams.

When all the hills like emeralds glow,  
 And winds in fragrant silence blow  
 Along the valleys warm and deep,  
 Heavy with scents that favour sleep,  
 But fierce against the barren scaur  
 Rush like unbitted steeds of war,  
 Then all the veins of life desire  
 The impulse of the season's fire.

When children in a joyous rout  
 Make all the hills together shout  
 With clear, glad echoes such as bring  
 The angels down to hear the spring,  
 And all the wakening fields rejoice  
 In concert with the blissful noise,  
 Then all the waste and drift of things  
 Is covered by love's brooding wings.

When on the ocean's moaning breast  
I lie in wonder's heart arest,  
And hear her cosmic music roll,  
As from some far and magic goal  
Enchanted voices of applause  
Float up from visionary shores,  
Then all my soul is like the sky  
When not a cloud is sailing by.

When softly from the breathing earth  
I see the grasses having birth,  
When buds appear, and flowers dress  
The windy hills with loveliness,  
And in each newly verdured vale  
The lilies shine, serene and pale,  
Then Hope, awakened from her dream,  
Renews again her sheeny gleam.

## A CATCH

GREEN leaves, with the green light under,  
And the red above,  
Burns there in your veins, I wonder,  
The fire of love ?

Wild lands that are rent asunder,  
Where fierce men rove,  
Grows there in your dense woods yonder  
The flower of love ?

Old earth o'er whose face the thunder,  
And lightnings move,  
Is there left in thy heart to plunder  
One spark of love ?

## QUEEN VICTORIA—MEMORIAL ODE

WE have not grief enough, nor tears, nor sighs  
 For our dead Queen whose life was like the skies,  
     Pure, and clean, and sweet  
     As where the soft winds meet  
 To lift the mists that would obscure the light ;  
     And calm and strong for right  
     As where great hills unite  
 To guard their flowery fields from soiling feet.

Our grief is but a feeble throb of pain  
 For one whose noble heart and righteous brain,  
     Without a doubt or pause,  
     Assigned the hidden cause,  
 And in the sand at once discerned the gold,  
     Whose soul had power to hold  
     All goodness, and controlled  
 Her people more through love than rigorous laws,

Whose genius was for liberty, and drew  
 Grave statesmen to accept her wider view ;  
     Who mourned when we were sad,  
     Was with our laughter glad,  
 In all vicissitudes our mother still ;  
     Who with a flawless will,  
     And heaven directed skill  
 Changed in her time to goodness what was bad.

If all the tears for all afflictions shed,  
 If all the sorrows lavished on the dead  
     Were in a moment brought  
     To penetrate our thought,  
 Such gathered anguish hardly could express  
     The unassuaged distress,  
     And sense of emptiness  
 Which aches through all the world from hut to court.

Yet though our weeping may for aught avail,  
 And sorrow's theme is but an idle tale,  
     If we can seize the facts  
     Taught in her life and acts,  
 If we can find the path of life she trod,  
     Companioned still by God,  
     Whose effluence clothes the sod,  
 And so elates the soul that naught distracts.

If we can find the golden thread that went  
 Through all her life until its force was spent,  
     Can follow where it leads  
     With equal force, and deeds  
 Marshalled to reach the highest peaks of all,  
     Then at the final call,  
     Whatever fate befall  
 We will have sown the earth with wholesome seeds.

Let us remember in the times to be  
 How her staid purpose fostered amity ;  
     And how, not heeding praise  
     Or blame, in perilous days  
 She strove to keep our ancient freedom whole,  
     Nor failed in self-control  
     When oft the distant goal  
 Shone, hardly seen, through life's obscuring haze.

And may the memory raise us in the scale  
 Of nations, till we reach that point of good  
 Where her life's impulse gathers to a flood,  
 On whose deep silence every little sail  
 Goes on secure, however rent and frail,  
 Unto those shores where never hint of blood  
 Darkens the grass, and where no slanderous tale  
 Frets through the bonds of human brotherhood ;  
 May we, remembering her intrepid heart,  
 And quiet force against disastrous days,  
 Never lose courage, nor desert our part,  
 But holding her example in our gaze,  
 Follow the path she found upon life's chart,  
 And firmly plant our feet in holy ways.



## HYMN TO THE ODE

God of our fathers ! at this time  
 Give us a moment's breath sublime ;  
 Let all our souls be washed as clean  
 As spaces of ethereal sheen ;  
     We pray Thee give us light to see  
     A glimpse of life's divinity.

God of the nations ! Whose decree  
 Hath set our sovereign's spirit free,  
 Let no dividing spite of creed  
 Disturb the harmony we need.  
     We pray Thee give us light to see  
     A glimpse of life's divinity.

Let no contentions interfere  
 To make our sorrow less austere ;  
 O ! may each mourning heart forget  
 Its other ways to chafe and fret.  
     We pray Thee give us light to see  
     A glimpse of life's divinity.

From north to south, and east to west,  
 To-day the drooping banners drest,  
 Show all the world in anguish bent  
 And bowed beneath Thy firmament.  
     We pray Thee give us light to see  
     A glimpse of life's divinity.

When on the glooming slope of death  
We yield at last our feeble breath,  
May we, because our queen was great,  
Undaunted meet the will of fate,  
And find in heaven the light to see  
The whole of life's divinity.

## QUATRAINS

CLOSE not thy lids on idle dreams,  
O voyaging soul aghast !  
Safe through the mazes of life's streams  
No dreamer ever passed.

Who fails in his allotted march  
To make one step for right,  
Spoils the wide curve of heaven's arch,  
And mars the infinite.

The soul that dies by flesh o'erwon  
Is like some tender growth  
On which a sated adder coils  
And kills in folds of sloth.

What is near us hath no beauty ;  
What is most remote,  
That we strain to make our duty,  
On the vague we dote.

Honour is like a polished shield,  
And truth a diamond bright,  
But love is like a thought of God  
That speeds on wings of light.

Eagles mount on easy wing,  
 Larks are light of feather,  
 Man, the heavy-footed thing,  
 Adds stars and sun together.

The peaks that pierce the deepest blue,  
 Though lofty, free and still,  
 Shine with no light of quickening dew,  
 Like lowly vale and hill.

Beauty born of winds and suns,  
 Lithe strength of storms and showers,  
 She gathered nature's graces once  
 Who sleeps beneath the flowers.

Roses from polluted soil  
 Draw delicious odours forth,  
 So doth virtue's secret toil  
 Sweeten noisome dens of earth.

Faith holds, and love ; round faith  
 Doubt folds his wings ;  
 And love, pursued by death,  
 Dreams fearful things.

Time passes, days and hours,  
 And months and years ;  
 For some begemmed with flowers,  
 For most with tears.

O ! men, is it love ye seek,  
Or something worse ?  
Some thing we may not speak,  
Or name in verse ?

What may a man do more  
Than find his soul,  
And in her holier light  
Seek the far goal ?

Lord ! to that holier self,  
Whose hands hold Thine,  
Give strength to endure, resist,  
And grow divine.

What God remembers cannot die ;  
What He forgets is dead at once,  
And shall not live though all we cry,  
Invoking winds and rains and suns.

When the dawn is in the sky,  
And the east begins to glow,  
Then I hear an angel cry,  
“ Lord ! to-day forget their woe.”

How weak, O Lord, Thou knowest,  
How weak we are ;  
In grime we seek the lowest,  
And miss the star.

Flourish, O lovely pansies !  
 Lift up your velvet faces !  
 Round you she weaves her fancies,  
 In you I see her graces.

The flower that on the arid rock  
 Shows all her rich attire,  
 Is like the face that smiles to mock  
 Fate's closing ring of fire.

O ! lay me naked in the earth,  
 That I may pass  
 More cleanly to assist the birth  
 Of flower and grass.

Othello looked for purity and touched  
 (So in his mind the poison worked apace)  
 The white, sweet skin he deemed so foully smutched,  
 And shrank aghast from an assigned disgrace.

The rage of mobs is like a fire in grass,  
 That flames and roars along a stream of wind,  
 For when the furious passions sink and pass  
 Only a waste of ashes lies behind.

Beyond these limits there are gods,  
 And higher still,  
 Dispensing favours, or with rods  
 Chastising ill.

Stars in the west are setting,  
Those in the east will rise ;  
Therefore, O ! weary pilgrim,  
Wait on the eastern skies.

## MAÍRIN

AN, thou art dead ; gone like a faded mist  
That leaves the flowered valleys all unveiled,  
And slips into the bosom of the sky.  
Thy hand is colder than a frozen clod.  
I touch it, and my very heart is stilled,  
And hangs suspended like a purple vase  
In a red-arrased chamber, void of fire,  
A dull and bloomless thing of barren wastes,  
Or lovely fruit the canker frets within.  
My blood is like a runnel caught and checked  
In the mid grip of winter ; yet I live,  
My eyes see still ; my cabined spirit feels,  
And in the deep recesses of my being,  
Where death may never come for all his power,  
Glows a clear flame that cannot be destroyed,  
A flame whose light, when it hath left this clay,  
Will shine in other regions, whither haste  
Innumerable souls on viewless feet,  
That may no more be busy with the world  
And its gross work. Dead as this mossy stone  
Whereon thy head is pillowed ; not a spark  
Now left in this soft house of pallid flesh  
To open rosy avenues for thought  
Of love and beauty, and delight, and peace,  
And quiet years of service for the world.



Here, whence the music of a singing soul  
Was wont to issue, till enchanted ears  
Forgot all other sounds, a seal is set  
That no magician with compelling art  
May loose or break. These fingers stark and thin  
That cling like icicles about the grass,  
And chill the very roots that grow beneath,  
Will in the fruitless years that gloom ahead,  
Lie listless in the dust of vanished dreams,  
Weaving no more with dexterous delight,  
Mantles of rosy wonder for the world.  
These limbs, whose agile sinews never tired,  
But with the winds along the dizzy crags  
Played and were glad, and when the morning woke  
To stare down darkness with his royal gaze,  
Went forth to gather from the fields and hills  
The garnered glories of their radiant souls,  
Are now for ever helpless, cramped and starved  
Of those warm streams that fed them as with fire,  
And over them a mould begins to creep,  
As o'er the marble limbs of some young god,  
Creeps the dull dusty issue of the years.  
These eyes that were the ministers of light,  
And saw behind the veils of flesh and sense,  
Where cloudy hosts of waiting angels stand,  
Like leagues of lilies in a lifting light,  
Are closed ; and those bright crystals they employed  
To flash a thousand merry glints of life,

And catch the under-gleam of budding things,  
 And the great glooms and glories of the world,  
 Are dead and lightless as a diamond is  
 Whereon some poisonous mouth hath breathed a  
     mist

Of its thick dew. This form that's here destroyed  
 Was full of lissom motion, and could dart  
 With courier speed amid the sparkling stars,  
 A thing of fiery joy, that in the light  
 Of the wide noon was like an eagle poised,  
 And in the cloudy regions of the sky,  
 Wandered through blushing Edens like a child.  
 Now it is like a lily stricken down  
 And wilting in the sun, that cannot feel  
 The gentlest fanning touches of the air,  
 And though a million odorous flowers would dance  
 Around it here, and breathe against its face,  
 Such poppy juice hath lagged along its veins,  
 It would not stir a limb, or lift a lash,  
 But lie as cold and dreamless as a rock  
 In some frore vale of the exhausted moon.

O love, of young and unremorseful hours,  
 Thy presence stayed, uplifted, and indued  
 My heart with exultations and delights,  
 Till all about me, with enraptured eyes,  
 I saw the radiant beauty of the earth,  
 And caught, in moments of intensest joy,  
 Quick flashes, like the sparkles on a sea

When windless light enrobes the waking world,  
 Of the divine effulgence, everywhere  
 Breaking into the light of common day—  
 Saw how the soundless harmonies evolved  
 From the deep springs of being, without pause  
 Filling the earth, and all the restless seas  
 With multitudinous life. Thy lifted hands  
 Beckoned my feet towards the purple heights,  
 Seen then above me in the aerial dome,  
 But now, alas, forever hid from view  
 By the grey mists that shroud me in from light.

Sweet love of wholesome days, and clean cool  
 nights,

Thy spirit was a guide to lead me on  
 When the unclouded amplitudes were mine,  
 And every field and shaggy headland gave  
 Assurances of peace, and thrilled my soul  
 With glad pulsations of delirious life,—  
 When all the visible world, from pole to pole,  
 Small or stupendous, breathing or inert,  
 Was garmented with glory,—when I drew  
 Deep draughts of incommunicable joy  
 From every change of the delicious hours,—  
 When, far away beneath a silver cloud,  
 A filmy light of sunset draped the earth,  
 Till the green hills, and their descending vales,  
 And all the budding kopjes peeping forth,  
 Glowed with the magic beauty of a dream,

And such glad stir of blood along my veins  
 Wrought me to passion, seeing there enveiled  
 A loveliness too exquisite for words,—  
 So far removed from man's familiar thoughts,  
 He could not, though he strove with ceaseless  
     care,

And used the skill of Orpheus in his song,  
 Weave in a net of his considered verse,  
 One tenuous thread of that ethereal robe,  
 Thou led'st me forth when little breezes woke,  
 And moved the sultry vestures of the night  
 With a slow cooling ripple, and a mist  
 Came fleecing up along the wooded kloofs,  
 Fuming in noiseless swirls about the trees,  
 And filling every emerald-hearted cup,  
 And all the moonlit hollows, and damp vleis,  
 And the green river reaches, to the brim  
 With intervolving billows, that the moon  
 Silvered to soothing beauty. Drawn by thee  
 I climbed a rugged range of towering heights,  
 Whose bossy shoulders, pushing through the stars,  
 Showed like the prows of some tremendous fleet  
 That slowly sailing up a waveless sea,  
 Breaks all the lazy water into light,  
 And whose bald heads of iron tempered rock,  
 Obscurely looming through a veil of cloud,  
 O'erlooked the round green dunes of rolling grass,  
 Silent and cold ; while down their broken sides,

Through lightless chasms, and sombre centred  
glooms,

Ran the clear laughter of a hundred streams,  
With silver chatter dancing on their way,  
And sending up from all their glimmering threads  
A murmur of innumerable notes,  
As if from out some secret vale of dreams  
Should float a chorus of impulsive joy  
From creatures that have felt the touch of spring,  
And sing for rapture in the seeding grass.

With thee I climbed the mountains of the east,  
From whence I looked, as one may look in dreams,  
And saw the future budding from the past ;  
Faint as a moon behind a pearly veil  
It bloomed at first, and then its petals grew,  
And rayed themselves into the universe,  
Striking the stars with glory, and the earth  
With inconceivable swift fires of life,  
That vanished into seeds, and roots and veins  
With vivifying force, to be again  
Rewoven into vernal garniture,  
And tossed about with clouds and streaming mists,  
When these replenish nature's arteries,  
And stanch the drouth of many burning weeks.

Together we were happy in the dark,  
And saw beneath the velvet clinging robes,  
And silver fringes of unfolding night,  
The smooth and oily levels of the sea,

Listlessly calm, for now the breeze was low,  
 And like a whisper out of dying lips,  
 Murmured a soft farewell to all the world,  
 And, soundless as a fading cloud of light,  
 Slipped into silence past the farthest cape,  
 Leaving a holy calm on all the air,  
 And on the sea, and on the gathered mist,  
 The mountains, and the liberal leagues of grass,  
 And throughout all the teeming amplitudes,—  
 A calm that seemed to hold all living things,  
 And even the sparkling laughter of the streams,  
 In one long pause of pulseless ecstasy.

Thy light was like a sacerdotal robe  
 Drawn close about me, thrild with thrilling heats ;  
 And when disastrous hours came, and beat  
 With ruthless strokes, and unconsidered rage  
 Many to earth for ever, and broke down  
 Deep laid defences in their mad career,  
 I blanched not, nor retreated from the path,  
 For still above me in the ravening heavens,  
 I saw the frolic twinkle of thy star,  
 That peeped above the ruin of the wind,  
 And kept my purpose valid through the stress.

Without thee we are only witless fools  
 That wander through a world of shattered lights,  
 Blind and decrepit, grovelling, meagre, weak,  
 Hither and thither nosing in the dust,  
 Like hounds at fault upon a doubtful trail.



Absorbed in sorrow we can only hear  
Sobbed voices from the under world of grief,  
That moan about the sad and lonely hills  
When the grass sickens and the earth is cold.  
We press into the sweating marts to find  
Each weary day more weary than the last,  
Until the bitterest weariness of all,  
The weariness that wearies of itself,  
Smothers the final spark, and we despair.

## GOD AND MAN

Lo, God is as a child  
If man will only bend  
To kiss His lips that smiled  
At thought of him as friend,  
Who is of good beguiled,  
And careless of his end.

For man is high and proud,  
And walks with head uplift,  
Is hardly overbowed  
By powers he cannot sift,  
And recks not of the shroud  
To which he soon must shift.

He only sees to-day  
The compass of his wants,  
Is mean enough to pray  
What time his bosom pants  
With fear and wild dismay  
That God will spoil his vaunts.

The spirit that abides  
In all these common things,  
That moves the cleansing tides,  
And in all music sings,  
The budding rose divides  
To bloom in scented rings,



That holds the balance true  
Between the rolling spheres,  
Makes spring to show her hue,  
And marshals all the years,  
Crowns life from death anew,  
And smiles behind our tears,—

This spirit unto man  
Is but a careless thought,  
A something whence he can,  
When sorely overwrought,  
Draw force of hope to span  
A bridge to heaven's court ;

No more ; man's prideful glance  
Sweeps all the starry ways ;  
His scornful countenance  
Upon no pity stays ;  
He stakes his soul with chance,  
And for her favour plays.

## RONDEL

MANY loves and wild desires  
 Kill at last the soul of love,  
 Death so compassed soon shall prove  
 All is lost that so expires,

Burn the heart in one love's fires,  
 Let it not for others move ;  
 Many loves and wild desires  
 Kill at last the soul of love.

He that looks and quickly tires,  
 He that lingers but to rove,  
 Rends the net of iron wires  
 Caging passion's lawless drove ;  
 Many loves and wild desires  
 Kill at last the soul of love.

## LET ME BE CLEAN

LET me be clean  
In thought for aye,  
Let nought bemean  
My living-way ;  
Even in my dreams  
Let me be pure  
As mountain streams  
Whose limpid gleams  
No silts obscure.

Let me be white  
As lilies are,  
Steadfast in light  
As yonder star ;  
And let no deed  
Of mine destroy  
The smallest seed  
Whose growth would feed  
A shred of joy.

That so at last  
When dreams are done,  
And life has passed  
Beyond the sun,

I may have left  
A clearer way  
To feet bereft  
Of strength, and deft  
Only to stray.

## SONG

THE hills are dark, the narrow path is steep,  
No light above, and here a rugged way ;  
Let me lie down, Ah, God ! a little sleep  
Would ease the weary day.

A little rest in silence and content,  
And dreamless as the slumber of the sea,  
Would stay my soul or ere the light be spent  
And time grows dark for me.

The broken dreams of men are all around,  
Scattered like roses in a rain of fire,  
Shards of their hopes encumber all the ground  
Whose hands have dropt the lyre.

Darkness above me in the clouded arch,  
And here a cold and cheerless prospect chills,  
Yet after rest let me not cease to march  
Towards the purple hills.

## SONG

A BREEZE that was full of music  
Came over the drooping wheat,  
And it rose, and fell, and faltered,  
And sank away in the heat.

All day like a bird o'erwearied,  
In a bower of gracious shade  
It folded its silver pinions  
And dreamed of its mountain glade.

Though the burning hours assailed it,  
Safe hid in its secret nest  
It lay like a maiden's passion  
Asleep in her sinless breast.

And lo ! when the fierce light faded,  
And the soundless shadows grew,  
It woke from its sleep and fluttered  
Away to its vale of dew.

## SONG

SWEET as your thoughts are in their nest,  
The cosy confines of your breast,  
So sweet the words are that you use  
To give those thoughts to me as news.

Pure as your soul is where it lies  
In those coy depths that are your eyes,  
So are the looks which you employ  
To send me records of its joy.

Soft as the light upon your face  
Of incommunicable grace,  
So is the influence round you drawn  
From silvery night and rosy dawn.

Bright as the dewdrops on the grass,  
That sparkle while great planets pass,  
So in its crystal purity  
Shines all your spirit out to me.

## SONG

Solomon *se repent*—"Comfort me with apples, for  
I am sick of love."

TAKE away the apples !  
Love is still my comfort,  
Love that like the morning  
Fills the sky with roses ;

Love that like the noonday  
Floods the earth with glory,  
Light, and warmth, and beauty,  
And superb desires ;

Love that when the evening  
Draws her velvet curtains,  
Brings a fragrant message  
From the closing flowers,

And when stars are filling  
All the windless heavens,  
Feels a deeper longing  
Than the lips can utter.

Love is still my comfort—  
Fields are green and gracious,  
And the world for ever  
Now is full of music.



## SONG

WERE they twin stars that beamed  
Softly out of the night ?  
Down through the weeping heavens  
Shone their ineffable light.

Was it her face I saw,  
There where the starlight beamed,  
Or was it the thought of my soul  
That slept in its sorrow and dreamed ?

Was it her voice I heard  
Whispering faint and low,  
Was it her voice, or my heart  
Breaking to ease its woe ?

Her face, and her eyes and voice,  
I see and hear in my sleep,  
And the soundless ocean of pain  
Grows dark, and lonely and deep.

## SONG

BLUE skies that have no cloud,  
Where no winds blow,  
Green hills without a shroud  
Or crown of snow,  
Lush vales where the lily pales  
With all delight,  
Low river banks with ranks  
Of flowers alight—  
These are the dreams we have  
When first love makes us brave.

Rich gardens where the rose  
Blooms and is sweet,  
Where tender things repose  
Nor fear the heat,  
Fair days that are loud with praise  
Of wordless glee,  
And foamless seas the breeze  
Moves amorously—  
These are the dreams we have  
When first love makes us brave.

All sweet things that have had  
Their dream of love,  
All that with beauty clad  
Rejoice to move

With these through the magic trees  
That shade the path,  
Where strong love lives and gives  
All that he hath—  
These are the dreams we have  
When first love makes us brave.

## SONG

Kiss the tender petalled rose  
Till thy heart is pure as fire,  
Purged of life's disturbing woes,  
Pulsing only to aspire,

Kiss the poppy's dreamy face  
Till thine eyelids droop and close,  
So forgetting all disgrace,  
Thou shalt win a dead repose.

Kiss the poppy, kiss the rose ;  
One will bathe thy soul in light,  
Round thy life the other throws  
Shadows of an endless night.

## SONG

WHY now,  
Since all is said and done,  
Since life, so long begun,  
Was wrongly started ?

Why should we meet to-day,  
When all I think or say,  
When all I hope or pray  
Is sorrow-hearted ?

Ah ! long,  
Long shall I live to know  
All the embittered woe  
Of love deserted.

Yet now,  
Since we have met so late,  
I cannot mend my state,  
Still let me smile at fate,  
Though broken-hearted.

## SONG

WHEN I am dead, I wonder  
If from her golden eyes  
A silver teardrop will descend  
For wistful memories ?  
Or will no shadow darken  
Across them when she hears  
That I am gone for ever  
Where hearts forget their fears ?

Whether she weep, or laughter  
Light up her golden eyes,  
Will matter then but little  
When I am done with sighs.  
But now to know her feeling  
May flood my soul with light,  
And give me strength serenely  
To pass into the night.

## SONG

LET thy sorrow lie  
In the heart's hot core,  
Where none may hear it sigh  
However smarts the sore,  
And when thy lips would cry,  
Shut close the pallid door.

Hide thy sorrow well  
From all the vulgar crowd,  
Silence it with the spell  
Of seeming joy ; be proud  
When death's unpitying knell  
Reminds thee of a shroud.

Let no moonbeams catch  
In thee a glimpse of pain ;  
Hide it where none may watch  
How it doth bleed in vain,  
How all its pulses match  
The fever in thy brain.

## SONG

O ! WERE I first a rosy wreath  
Upon her brow to rest,  
She'd feel the tremor of my love  
Stir in her maiden breast.

And were I next a violet  
Breathing against her side,  
The fragrance of my vestal love  
Would through her spirit glide.



## CONTRAST

BROWSING cattle, sleek and clean,  
Stand in waves of seeded grass,  
Each in calm, unstudied mien,  
Careless of what comes to pass.

But we fret against the cords  
Drawn by fate around our feet,  
Fume with blast of idle words,  
Weak as cowards in defeat.

## HYMN

THE music of the worlds of light  
We hear more clearly than of old,  
The wonders of the cosmic night  
Man's spirit travails to unfold.

The deeps that seemed beyond our ken,  
Where triple darkness held her sway,  
Show now a blush of dawn to men,  
And slowly brighten into day.

From where the stars their courses hold  
Harmonious intuitions flow,  
And through the mists obscure and cold  
Shines now the surely quickening glow,

A glow that flashes into fire,  
A stream of light serene and strong,  
Wherein our souls shall lose desire  
For selfish aims that lead to wrong.

Through clearer skies the heights are seen,  
The darkness trembles into dawn,  
And o'er the heavenly ramparts lean  
Familiar faces long withdrawn.

We feel them near us in our pain,  
Their joys increase because of ours,  
And when our final sins are slain  
We too shall wield their ampler powers.

## DROUGHT IN SPRING

No tree can flower, the fierce skies shower  
A rain of scorching rays ;  
The haggard hills are stark and red,  
And in the streamless valley bed  
    The burnished boulders blaze.

There is no bloom upon the pear,  
No blossom on the peach,  
The young leaves of the apple trees  
Are shrivelled, dry and sere ;  
No glint of green is on the grass,  
And through each choking mountain pass  
    Dry windy torrents screech.

Dry winds that sweep like blasts of flame  
From where the restless fires  
Leap from the sand of a barren land,  
And rush, and roar, and for evermore  
With pitiless ravage southward pour,  
Licking the earth till her nascent mirth,  
And all her fervour of young desires  
Sink, and fade, and are blown to dust,  
And all the beauty she dreamed and planned,  
And all the seeds of the season's lust  
    Perish or ever they come to birth.

Each tender thing that dreamed of Spring  
 And her redeeming breath,  
 Is palsied in its velvet sheath  
 By winds that lift and swing  
 Huge dusty columns up and round,  
 Until they reach the hazy bound  
 Where sky, and dust and leprous ground  
 Mingle like visions in a swoond  
     When life sweats out in the throes of death.

Only the hardy aloes grow  
 Along the mountain breast  
 Each scarlet bloom is like a plume  
 Above a warrior's crest,  
 And on the barren slopes they stand  
 Like trusty guards at rest ;  
 And here and there  
 In the blinding glare  
 A gaping crevice lifts  
 The plump leaves of the prickly pear  
 That loves the desert drifts,  
 And stands supreme where the black rocks gleam  
 In the broken boulder rifts.  
 The glassy glint of the naked flint,  
 And the sheen of the armed blades,  
 Shed the soulless light of a grinning spite  
 On the ridge of the treeless shades.

The sky is dim with dust, and red  
 The turgid furnace throbs  
 Above a world as dry and dead,  
 And dewless as a desert bed,  
 Where all day long the hot wind sobs  
 Or sighs, and whispers low in dread,  
 As if its soul, with horror fed,  
 Before a host of demons fled,  
 Like one on whom disasters shed  
 Long years of failure's agonies.

No cloud is in the burning cope,  
 No little cloud with spotless shroud  
 May there for fear abide ;  
 She feels the beat of the ruthless heat,  
 And melts like snow from a sunward slope,  
 Or the joy of a leper's bride.

No bird note trills in the lonely hills,  
 Where only the winds are loud,  
 And all night through no jewel of dew  
 Slips out of a sleeping cloud.

Through the fierce hot hours  
 With wasting powers,  
 The starving creatures roam,  
 With parchéd throats, and lips adust,

With eyes o'erfilmed and dull,  
 And gaunt ribbed sides, whose hairless hides  
 Are cracked and scurfed like the peel of rust  
 That covers a weathered hull,  
 They search with listless feet, nor find  
 In all the veld one luscious rind  
 Of melon to appease the drouth  
 That burns in every gaping mouth,  
 And drags, and eats at the milkless teats  
 Of the cow, and the ewe and the staggering mare,  
 Whose young's thin voice is the piteous noise  
     That grizzles the farmer's hair.

And like a corse a haggard horse  
     Crawls to the slimy pool,  
 So ashy-grey he looks as may a wan and wasted  
     ghoul,  
 A thing wherein some nameless sin  
     Hath crushed the spirit's rule.  
 High in wide wastes of withering air  
     The waiting vultures fly,  
 Or swoop in rings on hissing wings  
     To where sick creatures lie ;  
 And sideways down with avid stare  
     They watch the filming eyes ;  
 Then beak in flesh whose quivering mesh  
     Attests its agonies.

Dead in its bed the river is ;  
The fountain flows no more ;  
The vlei is dry, and green bones lie  
Where grass was green before,  
And sickly smells come from the wells  
Where all was sweet of yore.



## ODE FOR PEACE

I FELT a hand that touched me in the night,  
And with strange ardour urged me to depart  
Out of myself into a wider light,  
And sweeter regions, where no evil smart  
Of passion should my being interfuse,  
And where no bloody dew  
Of slaughter should begrime the patient earth,  
Where is no anger to becloud the Muse,  
Nor any fearful sights to banish mirth ;  
Where halcyon days and undisturbed nights,  
Assuring calm delights,  
Help men to grow in mental stature strong,  
And where the soul for ever feels a sense  
Of her essential goodly innocence,  
That is increased the more she scorneth wrong ;  
Where every fervent moment glows with thought  
Out of pure feeling wrought,  
And each unto the other closely moves  
With hands of service and a heart that loves.

And soon I found me at the ivory gate  
Through which somewhiles the soul will take her  
way,  
Leaving the empty body like a weight  
Discarded when the purpose fears delay ;

And from the sapphire windows I beheld,  
 Standing where mists dispelled,  
 Before a mellow, intempestuous light,  
 That like a soundless fountain softly welled  
 Out of the spangled regions of the night,  
 An angel with imperishable eyes,  
 And pure glad charities  
 Fondling about her tender smiling lips,  
 And in her look the wonder of a dream,  
 Full, warm, and soft as is that rosy gleam  
 That like a virgin blush at morning slips  
 Over the silver glory of the stars,  
 Or throws out filmy bars,  
 That rib the orient windows of the day,  
 Whose golden banners flash in brave array.

Her luring eyes entreated all my soul  
 To journey with her through the crisping air ;  
 Wherefore I left the check and dull control  
 Of limb and brain, and up a silver stair,  
 Made by pure star-beams slanting down to earth,  
 Went with her gladly forth  
 Towards a stately mountain in the East  
 Set high to catch the day's first throb of birth,  
 While in the lower land no bird or beast  
 Feels the cool touch of dawn upon its face,  
 Nor stirreth in its place ;  
 And soon we reached the highest purple crest,

Whereon alighting, all the world beneath  
 Lay in a slumbrous ease of rhythmic breath,  
 And all the murmur of its folded rest  
 Fluttered the balmy pulses of the breeze ;  
 But she, not heeding these,  
 Said, " Here I leave thee ; hence thou mayst behold  
 The dubious past, and what the ages hold."

In dim, warm pools of water I beheld  
 Where the soft mud lay black in steaming heat,  
 As if some tiny specks of matter swelled,  
 Moved out an arm, or made a leg retreat ;  
 Bloodless and boneless points of life, whose sense  
 Insphered omnipotence,  
 To keep such formless substance in control,  
 And guide its slow development from thence  
 Up the long avenues to conscious soul.  
 I saw the young world spinning through a sweat  
 Of vapour, bare and wet,  
 And all along its hills and valleys flew  
 Quivers of life ; like sun-starts on a lake  
 Innumerable shoots and buds outbrake,  
 And the first spring her gaudy mantle drew  
 Over the naked earth ; and while I gazed  
 A sudden glory blazed  
 Up from the ground ; and splendours of great flowers  
 Flashed into life beneath the ceaseless showers.

Thick mists began to roll about the world,  
 And hot rains hissed against the fervid rocks ;  
 Clouds, interlaced with running fires, unfurled  
 Their humid banners to the thunder-shocks,  
 And trailed in shreds across the darkened heaven ;  
 Wide rents broke through the levin,  
 And from the seething mud whose murky steam  
 Rose slowly with the wind, sheer up was driven  
 Above the unstable hills a turbid stream  
 That in great splashes fell to earth again ;  
 And in that fouling rain  
 Gigantic creatures of the primal days,  
 Lurched, dimly seen, about the reedy fens,  
 Or sprawled uncouth beside their noisome dens,  
 Shapeless as terror when a dream betrays  
 The soul unto a desert's viewless dread ;  
 Upon the slimy bed  
 Of lake, and sea, and river monstrous forms  
 Grovelled in knots like intervolving worms.

These were the wakened spirit's great essays—  
 Hummocks of flesh of rude unwieldy shape,  
 That oared about the tepid water-ways,  
 Or crawled through slime around some misty cape ;  
 Exhaled their poisonous breath against the moon  
 Until she seemed to swoon,  
 Or flew in swarms across the stormy day  
 Adding a darkness to the sombre noon ;

And all about the oozy islands lay,  
 Half-buried in a viscid slush of spawn,  
 Whence momentarily were born  
 Innumerable progeny, distorted bulks  
 That when they moved about the sluggish lakes,  
 Or crept for ambush into dusky brakes,  
 Seemed liker hills, or slowly heaving hulks  
 Of derelicts upon some sleepy main,  
 Than things of living grain :  
 And the young earth beneath her hideous brood  
 Felt the fierce joys of her strange motherhood.

But with a ceaseless impulse to inspire  
 Divine ambitions in the beast and flower  
 The spirit bowed through aeons dark and dire,  
 Fretted and foiled by some oppugnant power,  
 Yet ever moulding matter to its will ;  
 With strong insistent skill,  
 Laboured through all the labyrinthine ways,  
 Cunningly bent her purpose to fulfil,  
 And faltered not, though all the nights and days  
 Opposed her with destruction : she refined  
 The chambers of the mind,  
 From age to age advancing, till she made  
 The brain by slow accretions larger lobed,  
 And ever in more brilliant beauty robed  
 All the small creatures of the sun and shade,  
 Dowered the earth with loveliness supreme,

And flashed the heavenly gleam,  
 And moving in the secret cells of things  
 Woke life to feel the pulses of the springs.

Up from the deep the generations came,  
 Sore travailing to win a little way,  
 Faltered perchance as might a beaten flame  
 Checked by the wind upon a gusty day ;  
 But with divine deliberation fraught  
 Obeyed the hidden thought,  
 Unfolding countless images thereof  
 To show the gains of what the Spirit sought ;  
 Yea, as their robes of flesh the creatures doff,  
 The fluctuant fires of their living light,  
 In busy death's despite,  
 Quicken the blood to nourish other thews  
 That likewise run their little course, and draw,  
 Through quenchless yearnings for the higher law,  
 Strength to employ and garner all their dues  
 For greater uses in a future birth,  
 That so increasing worth  
 May raise all life into the light that streams  
 Out of the starry regions of God's dreams.

Lo ! out of death must come a brighter birth,  
 Else were the fruitful issues of the years  
 No better than the arid growths of dearth ;  
 Out of the night, whose dews are only tears.



Must bud the flaming roses of the dawn,  
 Whose petals, newly born,  
 Advance their cooling shadows o'er the world  
 Till in the splendour of full light they're torn  
 And shredded into vermeil mists, enfurled  
 About the capes and mountains of the sky ;  
 Yea, all sweet things that die  
 Must be the cause for sweeter things to live ;  
 Out of corruption's charnel-odoured soil,  
 Must spring the harvest of the Spirit's toil,  
 And though all lives are swiftly fugitive,  
 Behind cold death creative power endures,  
 Working all mystic cures ;  
 And far withdrawn into the boundless deeps  
 The Eternal Sower smiles on what he reaps.

As yet unto this moment all is dark,  
 Not chaos, but the comprehension lacks  
 To find a warrant for the living spark,  
 Or trace an order in these dubious tracks  
 That cross, and stop, and turn, and disappear  
 As if in aimless fear,  
 Tremblingly eager to escape a doom  
 Whose instant stroke is fatal ; everywhere  
 Destruction meets the creatures in their gloom ;  
 Through ceaseless prodigality of waste  
 The generations haste ;  
 Seeming confusion in the method hides

The great proemion's prophecy of good  
 To come, and all along a trail of blood  
 The beast procession moves, halts, and subsides  
 Like a spent wave into the trough o' the sea,  
 To rise again and be  
 Crested with sparkling life, that as before  
 Will flash and run its bubbles up the shore.

Now Man appears ; I see him slowly change  
 From form to form, and each of finer grain,  
 Beast-like at first and lower ; since his range  
 Is ampler on the curves of joy and pain,  
 It needs must be his loose defenceless mind  
 Will shift with every wind,  
 And young invention's frolic fits of play,  
 Or blood-inspired orgies will not find  
 A let to break their fury, or delay  
 The intemperate issues of a sudden brawl ;  
 But though he limp and fall,  
 And haunt for ages all the gory slopes  
 That drain their wetted sides into a sea  
 Fulfilled long since of human agony,  
 He must advance who looks before and hopes ;  
 And since he gathers wisdom out of fears,  
 Finds reason for his tears,  
 And preens the wings that falter, he must rise  
 To gauge the depths of nature's mysteries.



The apex of the pyramid of life  
 He crowns, yet savage blood leaps in his veins,  
 And his best dreams are still of war and strife  
 And carnage ; and the sweat of battle drains  
 Out of his limbs, with dust and clammy dew  
 Mixed to a viscid ooze ;  
 And passions seize him in their fiery grip,  
 Dragging him down in spite of iron thews,  
 For muscle only serves to wield the whip.  
 More subtle strength must vivify the soul  
 To break the close control  
 Of flesh upon her swift ethereal wings,  
 Though check to muscle also is a means  
 To make her chafe until impatience preens  
 Her feathers for escape ; propitious springs  
 Gladden the earth with light of dancing flowers,  
 And so the spirit's powers,  
 In the right season of their secret growth,  
 Waken the flesh from its corrupting sloth.

Stronger his vision grows with Time's advance—  
 The inner vision of the deeper soul,  
 That shows him all the gardens of romance,  
 With knights and ladies taking happy toll  
 Of life, where all vicissitudes combine  
 To polish and refine,  
 What else would crawl along in muddy grooves,  
 And so continue in a base decline,

Back to the beast that lacks the higher loves,  
 The beast whose dreams run down a sanguine trail  
 Where all bright visions fail :—  
 That shows him the clear heights of science, crisp  
 And cool, and frosty as a winter sky  
 When all the stars are shining far and dry  
 Through air undimmed by any faintest wisp  
 Of cloud, and when no moonbeam's silver sheen  
 Sheds glamour on the scene ;  
 Vision from brighter vision drawing light  
 To lead him out whose eyes are sealed with night.

And more, since man in sudden glimpses, sees  
 Under the languid eyelids of a dream,—  
 That stirs his thought, as by a little breeze  
 The fragrant fields are stirred until they gleam  
 With shaken sheen of jewels in the light,—  
 The ever wondrous sight,  
 That in a moment guides his weary feet,  
 Into the calmest regions of delight ;  
 Where flowery glades and grassy meadows sweet,  
 And waters flowing, or at peaceful rest,  
 Do all the place invest  
 With beauty, and with easeful deep content,  
 Under the golden quiet of the hours,  
 That are as balmy as when summer showers  
 Wash and make cool the day's soft azure, blent  
 With floating veils of pearly lusted mist,

Whose billows fold and twist,  
 And loop, and curl, and tumble like a sea,  
 Till into light they soar and cease to be.

Around him is the flash of viewless light  
 That none may see save only with the eye  
 Of inward sense ; from some ethereal height,  
 Set where no lidded vision may descry  
 That or aught else, a glory falls and glows  
 In all the hearts of those  
 Whose spirits for the moment are serene,  
 Uplifted, and forgetful of the woes  
 That swell the music of the mortal throne.  
 Instants of wonder, momentary glints  
 Of light that are the prints  
 Of feet whose mercies thrud the singing spheres,  
 He hath and sees, and his whole being leaps  
 Into a flame of joy whose rapture keeps  
 His mood above the ravage of the years.  
 Quick intuitions from the source of things  
 Come on their soundless wings,  
 And hover round him till the air is sweet  
 With the shed perfume of their secret beat.

Ever he moves towards the effluent light,  
 The imponderable splendour that o'ersweeps  
 The universe, and in its soundless might  
 Illimitably shivers, flows, and leaps

Through endless time, on ceaseless labour bent  
 To reach divine content,  
 Imperishable beauty, and desire  
 Refined to burn like purest flames, unblent  
 With aught that feeds the wick of carnal fire.  
 From the white fields of heaven unto him  
 Descend the cherubim ;  
 Immaculate thoughts like flowers in their hands  
 They bear, and in the shrine of his frail heart  
 Kindle young hopes that will not thence depart  
 For ever, but increase as light expands  
 Under the cope of dawn when not a speck  
 Of cloud is there to fleck  
 The soft, still radiance of the budding hours  
 That slowly quicken into day's hot flowers.

And having reached these high, white lands of  
 rapture,  
 Whose frontiers shine with angels holding guard,  
 Shall man not use his energies to capture  
 Remoter peaks with peace for his reward ?  
 Peace the strong-eyed, the steadfast, the divine,  
 Whose feet will not decline  
 Into hot ways of passion, nor be drawn  
 Where reeks the musty odour of stale wine,  
 And ribald voices greet the murky dawn—  
 Peace whose white hands with plenty overflow,  
 Whose crystal heart will show

Immense compassion for such drooping eyes  
 As the world scorns for poverty ; she fills  
 All ways with beauty, and her work distils  
 Rich balms of comfort ; she is staid and wise  
 In all her counsels, just and temperate,  
 And without spite or hate  
 In her great soul, and where she reigns supreme  
 Falls the pure light of God's supernal dream.

She doth not flash a sword to wound the world,  
 Nor build leviathans to rule the sea,  
 And shake the sunless deeps with thunder, hurled  
 Out of the vicious throats of enmity,  
 When nations rage against each other's coasts.  
 She hath no glittering hosts,  
 Whose office is destruction, to command ;  
 And when the victor in a quarrel boasts  
 Of all the slain, and how the conquered land  
 Is but a ruin, she with weeping eyes  
 Recalls their miseries  
 On whom the wanton ravage of their kind  
 Fell like a fire ; she yearns for blowing fields  
 Yellow with corn that double measure yields,  
 Green waves of grass beneath a taintless wind  
 Opulent hills with kine and sheep o'errun,  
 And the good heat o' the sun  
 Helped to achieve its purpose ; only then  
 Is she enamoured of the works of men.

She loves the jewels on the morning grass,  
 And the pure winds that fan the iron hills  
 Enrapture all her being as they pass  
 Laden with balm to ease the languid ills  
 That linger in the valleys; leagues of land,  
 Tamed to the ploughman's hand,  
 And shining, newly-turned, to greet the days  
 With favourable promise to withstand  
 Assaults of famine, these receive her praise,  
 And thrill her bosom with delicious pleasure  
 In rich, unstinted measure ;  
 And all the quiet fruitage of the years,  
 Gathered when no alarms disturb the hours,  
 And garnered without let of wasting powers,  
 Enthrall her careful thought ; she hath no fears,  
 Save when the angry trumpets wake the night,  
 With sudden fierce affright,  
 And all day long the sated vultures sweep  
 On hissing wings above the carrion heap

In her deep soul is no intemperate heat  
 Of patriotic ardour to destroy  
 The source of justice, and retard the beat,  
 Set to the music of all human joy,  
 Of her strong heart ; her passionate desire  
 Is to see man aspire  
 Above the narrow circle of his kin,  
 Outsoar the impulse of his blood, and fire



The world with love's delirium, till he win  
 The cooler regions of unfettered soul  
 Where flesh resigns control,  
 And the pure spirit sheds her radiant light  
 With the large richness of a risen star,  
 Impartially on all ; her keys unbar  
 The doors that give delivery from night,  
 And free the myriads who are slaves indeed  
 To wealth's insensate greed.  
 She smiles, and all the earth with joy responds  
 And man forgets the torture of his bonds.

Her brood of men delve into all the springs  
 Of Nature, and lead out the silver stream  
 Over the arid earth, till wisdom brings  
 A sense of higher powers, and the Gleam  
 Glows on enchanted faces, while they gaze,  
 With eyes in wide amaze,  
 To see how comely is the universe  
 In this new light, whose quick revealing rays  
 Scatter the clouds and make the mists disperse.  
 And they who saw not any lovely sights,  
 Are since with young delights  
 Transported, till the dust upon their shoes  
 Shines with divine significance ; the sweat  
 Wrung from hot brows, with anxious furrows set,  
 Prefigures happy issues ; sorrow's dews  
 Will never fall where men in amity,

Consenting to agree,  
Stand closely bound to fight against the evils  
That drag them down to feed the lust of devils.

Glory and loveliness, and calm delights,  
And wide horizons open to the sky,  
And sure reliefs from anguish, and the blights  
That settle on the soul and drain it dry  
Of all its sweet solitudes, will come  
When Peace enfolds the home ;  
And all the lands that raise her snowy flag,  
Woven of lily-tissue, will become  
Strong to advance against the ceaseless drag  
Of custom ; and the stale desire of gain  
Will vanish in the train  
Of many fearful horrors that begrime  
The minds of men ; illusions that destroy  
The hopes that might have blossomed into joy,  
Will disappear like winter's numbing rime  
Before the growing ardour of the Spring :  
Immortal Peace will bring  
Into these broken and distempered years  
A spur to progress, and a balm for tears.



## THE GARDEN OF LOVE

I LOOKED where the apples bloomed  
In the garden of love ;  
And the bees were like specks of gold,  
Like beads of gold upon the buds—  
Like quivering drops of flame  
Falling into the flowers,—  
Like humming flecks of fire  
They circled about the trees,  
And clung to snowy clouds of bloom  
Like nets of rubies drawn  
Over a maiden's breasts.

And roses I saw, all red  
And pink as the waking dawn  
When every moment glows  
With lovelier tints, until  
The orient fields are alight,  
Alight with ineffable flowers,  
Whose delicate hues recall  
The ache, and the joy, and the fear  
Of days gone down in a mist,  
In a mist of sorrowful tears.

And past the apples, I saw,  
 In the magical light of a dream,  
 In a glamour of opaline light,  
 How the roses drooped and died,  
 Withered, and fell away  
 In the ruining breath of love,  
 The breath that destroyed their hearts  
 And struck their lips like a flame,  
 Till their scent was the scent of death,  
 The odour of faded things.

And lower in the marshy pools,  
 By still, wan waters I saw  
 Pale armies of lilies gleam ;  
 Clouds like doves in a storm  
 Swayed together and fell,  
 Opened and drew erect  
 Their quivering ranks, like foam  
 With light of gold in its heart ;  
 And ever the thick warm breath  
 From the garden of love  
 Thrilled them with hopes of life,  
 And froze them with fears of death,  
 Till every lily sighed  
 And moaned in the desolate waste,  
 And their gold and silver was shed,  
 Like fire and snow together,  
 On patches of sickly sedge.

And in their midst,  
Far in the midst of their drooping heads,  
On the wet flags,  
In the midst of a feculent fen,  
In the midst of a creeping mist,  
A stealing clinging mist,  
I saw the figure of Love,  
Unhooded, with flaming eyes,  
And a cruel smile on his lips,  
And a bow in his hand of steel,  
That gleamed like a sword as it bent.  
Around him myriads of forms  
Prostrate, with heaving sides,  
Lay close on the steaming earth  
In a windless fog of despair—  
And the shafts from his bow went forth,  
The pitiless shafts of death,  
With indiscriminate aim,  
Piercing to right and left  
The hearts of the children of men  
With the unappeasable fire  
Of love that destroys at last,—  
That burns their bodies to dust,  
And shrivels their souls like grass  
Licked up by a raging flame.

And I looked through the choking mist,  
And saw, till my heart grew sick,  
That all they lying as dead  
Were young, with opulent hair,  
And bodies of flower-like grace—  
But their faces I could not see,  
Being bowed at the feet of the god.

## POOR TOM'S ACOLD

GNAW me, winter, in thy rage ;  
Bite till every feeling's dead ;  
Crush me in thy icy cage ;  
Blow thy rime about my head.

Numb my body ; stop my blood ;  
Make my members burn with pain ;  
Plunge me in a freezing flood ;  
Drive thy spears into my brain.

Grip my heart with frigid fingers ;  
On my very soul take hold  
With thy terrors ; while life lingers  
Scourge me thou ; poor Tom's acold.

## LAMBS ARE JOCUND IN THE GRASS

LAMBS are jocund in the grass ;  
Birds upon the budding trees  
Sing, while crystal waters pass  
Lisping liquid melodies.

Cows and oxen in the light  
Stand as in a dream of peace,  
Thinking not of winter's spite,  
Nor his hungry miseries.

And the cuckoo, bearing spring  
On his green enamelled back,  
Makes the bushland echoes ring  
In his amorous lady's track.

Rapture, mounting from the earth,  
Floods the sky with silver song ;  
All the fields are loud with mirth,  
Whither youths and maidens throng.

Blood that hardly seemed to move,  
Leaps to catch the season's fire,  
And the dimpled god of love,  
Bends the world to his desire.

## DREAMS

THE dreams of youth are borne on wings  
That never droop or tire ;  
An ancient's dreams are mouldy things  
Devoid of fire.

The dreams of youth are like those flowers  
That flush the dawn with light ;  
An ancient's dreams through dusty hours  
Drag down to night.

The dreams of youth are strong and fierce,  
And scale the highest crags ;  
An ancient's dreams are worms that pierce  
The mould of rags.

Around me now the dreams of age  
Crowd like the dregs of time,  
Blown on the breath of winter's rage,  
And white with rime.

## HOW COLD IS THE WORLD

How cold is the world when the heart is distressed,  
How lightless the sky to a spirit oppressed ;  
But the heart when it conquers, the soul when it  
    wins  
Regains what it lost to a legion of sins.



## THE CALL

O FATHER, hear you how the cold wind roars ?  
Hear you the clamour of the icy rain  
Beating and splashing on the window pane ?  
Hear you the rattle of the mouldy doors,  
And above all, that eerie wail of pain ?

I hear the cold wind driving on the rocks.  
I hear the water pouring from the eaves,  
And the fierce storm hurl through the dripping  
leaves.

I hear the house shake to the thunder shocks,  
But through it all, I hear no voice that grieves.

O father, there's a voice from far away ;  
It calls me, wailing in a plaintive key ;  
It makes me shiver while I cling to thee ;  
Its sound is softer than the sound of spray,  
When no wind stirs along the sleeping sea.

O, daughter, daughter, you are only cold ;  
Nestle against my bosom ; do not weep.  
The sun to-morrow will arise and peep  
Above the hills embossed with green and gold,  
And you with laughter wake the world from sleep.

And all night long he held her to his side.  
She seemed asleep ; and when the dawn grew red,  
He heard a sound that chilled him with its dread ;  
A little sound that softly broke and sighed,  
And told his aching heart that she was dead.

## MADEIRA HILL

NEAR QUEENSTOWN, S. AFRICA

A THOUSAND years of misery may pile  
Their weight upon me, till my shrunken flesh  
Is but a speck beneath the monstrous heap,  
Struggling with ineffectual attempt  
To free itself and gain a moment's ease,  
A little ease for all the aching limbs,  
And heart oppressed with the incumbent ills,  
That stifle every throb, and choke the blood  
Along the flagging veins : the light of day,  
Long since a benediction to my sight,  
Clothing with beauty all the vales and hills  
When summer verdure thrills the breathless soul,  
Or dry and sapless winter sends her dust  
Careering on the wings of icy winds,  
May in some fearful storm of clashing worlds  
Vanish for ever : trivial thoughts of things,  
And dreams that were the pilots of desire  
Guiding the soul through such tumultuous seas  
As strew their shores with wrecks of mighty men,  
Who journeyed chartless o'er their gloomy wastes,  
And perished in a seething crash of waves,—  
All these, and other memories, thick as bees  
Upon the threatened comb, may slip away,  
Lapsing like water into thirsty soil,—

But those green days, O lovely hill, those days  
 Spent in the silence of thy wooded kloofs,  
 Where God himself might rest and be refreshed  
 After huge labour in the fields of space,—  
 Those calm, unhurried hours, without noise,  
 That held me in their magic charm ; those dreams  
 That surged about me like a bursting sea,  
 When on thy grassy shoulders, calm and high,  
 I waited for the influx from above,  
 The strong exultant feeling that assures  
 All issues to the breaking heart, and brings  
 Peace, patience, and surcease of little frets,—  
 Those, and the memory of true friends, whose  
     love  
 Was nourished in more fruitful stuff than gold,  
 Will be to me through all vicissitudes,  
 Here, and hereafter when this blood is cold,  
 A sustenance more dear than meat and drink,  
 A power uplifting all my meaner self,  
 And clothing me with glory at the last.

## SONG—WINTER

SURLY winter's coming in,  
Fly away, Cuckoo—  
All the leaves are sere and thin,  
Bitten grass begins to droop,  
And the swallows sadly troop,  
Sitting on the roof and wires  
In the sun's declining fires :  
Hills that wore their summer green,  
Now in sombre brown are seen ;  
Winds blow cold about the sky ;  
Rivers fail, and vleis are dry,  
And the hours through dusty din  
Drag their weary wings along :  
So fly, cuckoo,  
Nor cry, cuckoo :  
Go where summer's coming in,  
And reveal her with a song.



## SONNETS





## DANTE TO BEATRICE

AH ! God ! the gulf between us is too dark !  
Too deep, and dark, and terrible to cross !  
If either now should launch a venturing bark  
The surging breakers would assail and toss,  
And rend it into pieces ; it would fare  
On these fell waters that between us scream,  
And fling fierce arms of hatred through the air,  
Like some frail atom in a demon's dream ;  
Yea ! it would perish and go down to doom  
In ravenous swirls of chaos, like a dove  
Caught in mid riot of the crash and boom  
Of fire, and rain, and thunder ; from above  
There where thou livest in pure divine  
Smile, and again this whole dark earth will shine.

FOR THE PICTURE " DANTE AND  
BEATRICE IN FLORENCE "

Lo ! it is she ! how pure she is and chaste !  
With what divine discretion do her feet  
Move o'er the flags along the quiet street ;  
No thoughts are hers to urge unseemly haste,  
Her eyelids droop with bluest veins o'erlaced,  
And all her being is as fresh and sweet  
As a white lily bending now to greet  
The dewy breath of spring ; her robes unbraced  
Shed fragrance as she goes with virgin pace  
Forth on her way ; and in her gracious mien  
I see all virtues gathered ; without pride,  
But modestly she lifts her tender face,  
Where guileless meditations shine serene,  
As if already she were heaven's bride.

## FAUST TO MARGUERITE IN PRISON

O ! TENDER heart that I have brought to woe !  
Whose happy throbs through me have gone to  
pain ;

O ! piteous soul, in which sometime did reign  
Pure, simple thoughts, that had the crystal flow  
Of white hill-waters, and the virgin glow  
That wakes a summer morning, free from stain,  
Immaculate as is some heavenly train  
Of angels in procession moving slow—  
How have I brought thee O ! divinely sweet !  
How have I dragged thee to this fevered hell  
Wherein thou sittest weeping, sad and dumb,  
With wan, cold lips that nevermore shall greet  
Me with a smile ! God knows I love thee well,  
Yet through my love hath all thy sorrow come.

OPHELIA TO HAMLET, SEEING HIM  
DISTRAUGHT

AH ! be not cruel, love ! be tender still !  
Ah ! see now, you have kissed the roses dead,  
And I have lilies for my lips instead ;  
My blood runs back as from some nameless ill  
To see thee strained to take an eager fill  
And harvest of fierce kisses ; face and head  
Thy hands and eyes gloat over ; all my skill  
To match such passionate degrees hath fled  
Like a scared bird in darkness ; loose thy hold  
Upon my bruised wrists, nay, do not so  
Glare love into my eyes that droop below  
Thy violent insistence ! I am cold  
When in thy voice I hear the frenzy grow  
That of thy will was never yet controlled !

## VRONSKY TO ANNA KARENINA

Lo ! I alone have seen her secret soul,  
And heard the fevered beating of her heart,  
And felt its lonely longing for the whole  
Of love ; her pain is mine ; the aging smart  
That burns a life to ashes, and o'erweighs  
All conscious moments with a load of woe  
I too have felt ; Yea ! when her anguish prays  
For quick destruction, and she weeps to go  
Into the wifeless country, I assist  
Her desperate intention with a prayer  
Strong as her own ; her wish is mine ; the gist  
Of her desire breathes round me in the air ;  
Of all men unto me alone she shows  
How her wrought soul with love and sorrow glows.

ROCHESTER SOLILOQUISES AFTER JANE'S  
FLIGHT

SHE loves me ! to all lovers glad and free  
" She loves me " is a clarion call to life,  
That giveth strength to seize the sword of life  
Wherewith to fight and win the highest fee  
In arms, or art, or science ; but to me  
" She loves me " is with poignant sorrow rife ;  
" She loves me " is an ever ruthless knife  
Held in my heart by callous destiny.

And she who loves ! what anguish seals her lips ?  
Through what dead fields do her lone footsteps stray ?  
What unimaginable fears eclipse  
The tender light that comes into her day ?  
What tears are hers that never dim the eyes !  
What burning thoughts ! Ah ! God ! what agonies !

## A CRUEL WOMAN

Now she is winter to him, her eyes freeze  
When he is near, and all her face is hard ;  
Her ruthless look benumbs him like a breeze  
After a night of frost, and her regard  
Disdains his piteous aspect as he goes  
With aimless feet about the dreary town,  
That hurts him with its careless open shows  
Of laughter ; her indifference will not frown,  
But placidly o'erlooks him, till it seems  
The welcome he beheld in former smiles  
Was feline joy that went before her dreams  
Of cruelty to come, her tender wiles  
The purring of a tigress, whetting teeth  
To crush his heart into a final death.

## HIDDEN LOVE

THEIR talk was of the common things ; they spoke  
Of how the wind had made the tender flowers  
Languish to death, of how the burning hours  
Had seared the very heart of spring, and broke  
Her mystic spell of passion to invoke  
Beauty to life,—of how the season's powers  
Had no assistance now from warméd showers,  
Of how no more the vernal sense awoke,  
But though their speech was of such things as these,  
Her secret heart that hardly dared to beat,  
Yearned with a love unutterably sweet,  
More deep and warm than silent tropic seas,  
Wherein are all the brooding mysteries  
And hidden wonders of creative heat.



## REQUITAL

It is not now a dream, this love of mine.  
Long years it lay beneath the arid earth  
And no rains fell to soothe the choking dearth  
Of the hot ground above it, and no shine  
Of fostering sun pierced to the gloomy mine,  
Where it was starved of that which gave it birth,  
Cramped and suppressed as in a hardened girth  
Of burning soil that made its roots combine  
Into a knot ; but on a day there came  
One with a little water in a vase,  
Which gently on the withered plant she threw,  
When lo ! it woke, and like a sudden flame  
Shot into life, and ranged its lily stars  
Around her like a fairy retinue.

## FROM THE DUTCH OF H. S.

O ! LOVE ! my love ! thine eyes caress my eyes !  
They seem to nestle in my soul ; they meet  
My passionate looks with looks as pure and sweet  
And tender as unwindy summer skies  
Washed in warm showers ; they are the oratories  
That draw me into prayer ; they light my feet  
Always to thee, and so each day I greet  
With answering fervour of tumultuous sighs  
The deep love glories of their vestal fires ;  
They hold me in the circle of their spells,  
Like some enchanted gazer, caught at last  
In webs a fairy princess weaves of wires  
Invisible ; they are the deep love-wells  
Where I may drink, nor ever faint or fast.

## INQUISITION

WHY do I love who am not blessed therewith ?  
Why spend my life in dreaming of her face ?  
Why do I follow what is but a myth,  
And proves me to myself as in disgrace  
For want of reason rightly to perceive  
That she is kind because she cannot love me ?  
That she is sweet because she must believe  
Her smile is still the med'cine to reprove me ?  
Why do I tarry when her wish is plain  
That I no more should linger in the way ?  
Why do I venture when I should refrain ?  
Why drag my shadow through her shining day ?  
Nay, ask no more, for love no reason holds,  
But like a flower to the light unfolds.

## THE ONE HOPE

SINCE all my hope is still to meet her there  
In the clear light of inward heaven, that shines  
So closely focussed it at once divines  
Our secret thoughts if they be clean and fair,  
Or full of choking horrors, like the lair  
In which some beast on shreds of carrion dines,  
Then stretches prone in reek of moulted hair,  
And hunts in visions till he heaves and whines ;  
Since this is all my hope, and since I would  
Be at her feet received as at a shrine,  
Let every thought, and every wish of mine,  
And each desire that ripples through my blood,  
Be henceforth pure, and tender and divine  
As those white crowns that feed the mountain  
flood.

## MAIRIN

My Lady's presence is a holy joy,  
Ineffable beyond the soul's desire ;  
No foolish goodness makes her weakly coy ;  
In her sweet eyes there is no luring fire ;  
No staid conceits do in her heart disturb  
Its nest of tender thoughts ; she holds the rein  
Whose office is to make my spirit curb  
Mad leaps into the burning deeps of pain ;  
Calmer she is than all the evening sky,  
When clouds upgather and the light appears  
In windless spaces of ethereal sheen ;  
Sweeter than odours when the roses sigh,  
And gem the morning with their fragrant tears,  
Pure as the flowers where no foot hath been.

## SHE WILL NEVER AGAIN VISIT THE OLD WELL

O ! WEARY watcher waiting at the well !  
She whom thou seekest cannot come again ;  
She cannot come to fill thy aching brain  
With thoughts as sweet as nectar in a cell,  
Or bright as flowers in a dreamy dell ;  
Her individual force is spent ; in vain  
Thou yearnest for the touch that banished pain ;  
No longer can she weave her mystic spell  
For she is now a part of all around,  
A spirit and an essence, a desire,  
An aspiration in the heart of things,  
That murmurs in the harmony of sound,  
Is white in lilies, red in flaming fire,  
And everlasting in recurrent springs !

## SIESTA

COME to me, sleep, when all the day is loud,  
And the hot cares and noises of the light  
Fret the raw wounds that irk, then, gentle sprite,  
Close round me like a drowsy bosomed cloud  
And fold me in from all the pressing crowd  
Of harsh solitudes ; obscure my sight  
With drooping lids, and soothingly unite  
My soul and thine in one dim filmy shroud  
Wrought in the vale of Lethè ; trance me deep  
In dreams ; sway me in easeful slumber ; close  
All avenues against distressful sound,  
And with thy downy wings about me, keep  
Congenial guard against insidious foes,  
Lest the gates part and my retreat be found.

## THE LION'S DREAM

Now he recalleth his triumphant days,  
And fervid throes of Equatorial fire  
Thrill through his heart, till re-aroused desire  
(His dream so shows him all his desert ways)  
To lap the scented blood of what he slays,  
Lifts him upon his feet ; a lurid ire  
Burns in his eyes ; a shaggy horror stays  
His mane erect in aspect grim and dire.  
Through all his limbs, and through his eager frame,  
Tense and alive in every cruel nerve,  
Surges a fearful tremor, and a groan,  
Deep and resounding as when breakers curve  
And lash the beach, roars out like rushing flame,  
And with his dream his royal mood is gone.



## SHAKESPEARE

EVEN as the sea that sips perpetual rain,  
And drinks a world of waters in a night,  
Returning these along the golden chain  
Sped down from heaven on the wings of light,  
Till in the soundless fields of crystal space  
Huge bastions of unsullied clouds are seen,  
Each resting on its silver-burnished base  
Above bare hills that wait the vernal sheen ;  
Instinct with fire, and such harmonious breath  
As murmurs in the music of a shower,  
Or thunders when the angry stops of death  
Crash open and reveal their tragic power—  
So Shakespeare's universal mind was filled,  
And thus through him a brighter world distilled.

## CECIL RHODES

SEER of visions that our feeble sight  
Failed to appraise, or only faintly saw !  
Dim shadowy shapes upon an alien shore  
They rose for us that had so little light  
We could not pierce the mists that seemed to draw  
Closer about them while we gazed, and made  
Their substance melt like shadows into shade  
When twilight slowly deepens into night.

But now the darkness lifts, and we behold  
As from a peak on which the sunlight blooms,  
Each separate form's incorporate majesty,  
Clear as those rocks that dare the highest cold.  
Based and secure above the passing glooms,  
They stand for eyes that were too blind to see.

## MARCUS AURELIUS

DUTY and courage were his stays ; through toil  
Incessant, and through hard laborious hours  
He strove to check the enervating powers  
That flow unseen into the heart, and foil  
All sweet desires, and make the soul recoil  
Into herself, as when in icy showers  
The tender petals of young opening flowers  
Shrink from the gusts that ravel them and spoil ;  
His gaze was on the highest mountain peaks,  
Where first the light shines when the dawn appears ;  
Through all vicissitudes he looked above,  
And looking so, he overlived the freaks  
Of human follies, conquered human fears,  
And felt the strength of whom the gods approve.

## HOT NORTH WIND

DOWN from the north a wind like rolling thunder  
Comes with a haze of dust along the sky,  
The trees are bent, their branches torn asunder  
Like straining wings that battle as they fly,  
Or men stooped forward as in act to run ;  
The tongues of flame that lick the panting earth  
Scorch with the double fire of wind and sun ;  
The grass is withered by the parching dearth,  
And heaps of flowers now devoid of scent  
Lie scattered in the ruin of the day ;  
All nature fails ; the very streams are spent  
To sate the thirsting wind, whose burning sway  
Wrecks the thick breathing earth that lately was  
Robed in a waving garment of young grass.

## MORNING

SLOW mists were on the ridges all around,  
And in the kloofs, and on the mountain side  
They moved and swayed, a softly flowing tide  
That foamed against the rocks without a sound,  
Then circled back upon the lower ground  
In folding mazes that would not abide  
Or linger there, but floated far and wide  
In sinuous waves no shores were set to bound.

Our raptured souls were in that magic sea,  
And in those wreaths that journeyed with the wind  
Were all our thoughts, and in each joyous mind  
The beauty of that morning mystery  
Became an exultation, yet to be  
Remembered when our mortal eyes are blind.

## SPRING

GREEN grass, green trees, and greenest wildernesses  
Of cool green ferns, and, ah ! such long green spaces  
Sleeping within the sunlight's warm embraces !  
Green-shadowed rills that gurgle through green  
    creases,

And deep green nooks wherein the locust dresses  
Her shining wings ; green dells and high green  
    places

O'er which bright swarms of sportive insect graces  
Flash and are gone, and know not what distress is ;  
Green-covered spots, green fields where greenness-  
    less is

By reason of the clouds of blowing daisies  
That variegate the verdure with their faces ;  
Green arbours where all greenest loveliness is  
Like little billowy puffs of maiden tresses  
That toss the light in golden mists and hazes.

## THE FIRST DAWN

WHAT blackness reigned before a star was born,  
When far across void spaces of the night  
The pale diaphanous wonder of the dawn  
Rose ghestlike on the unaccustomed sight  
Of all the unimaginable eyes  
(Strange creatures of the darkness sure were bred)  
That stared towards the east in wild surmise,  
To see the changing colours throb and spread,  
Innumerable films of rosy fire,  
Flushing the orient with their glowing tints,  
Clothing the haggard plains in rich attire,  
And flashing from great hills of naked flints,  
Until the gaunt and hungry earth displayed  
The jewelled splendour of a queen arrayed.

## THE MOUNTAIN TOP

WHAT witching hours of wild delight are here !  
What amplitude of healing airs that sweep  
Downward to wake the dreamers from their sleep  
Far in unhealthful valleys ! and what cheer  
Of gleeful laughter wins the soul from fear  
To gambol on these lusty heights like sheep  
Glad with the spring ! in what still pools and deep  
Shine spaces of the crystal atmosphere !  
What flowers are here ! what scented dells of shade !  
What carols make the morning musical !  
What fragrant coils of everlastings glow  
In secret nooks along each sinuous glade !  
What luminous waters swell and pause to fall,  
And rush to save the parching fields below.



## DROUGHT

Lo! all the land is dry and parched with heat,  
And all the hills are white with withered grass  
That hath no glint of greenness, and, alas!  
See how the lately waving fields of wheat  
Droop wearily towards a sure defeat  
Beneath the breath of scorching winds that pass  
Over the arid earth; how like a glass  
The hot flats shimmer in the ruthless beat,  
More strenuous as the burning weeks increase,  
Of quenchless and immitigable rays  
That make a terror of the rainless days,  
And the fierce vault of fire that will not cease  
To heap with death the long and dusty ways,  
And fill the earth with hunger's gaunt disease.

## AT A FLOWER SHOW

ROSES I saw, and poppies all alight  
With colours of the dawn, and rainbow hues  
Drawn from the sun and all the fostering dew  
Distilled upon them by the brooding night,  
And delicate sweet-peas, so purely dight  
They must have bloomed where dusty winds refuse  
To blow, or haply where nuns dream and muse  
In silent meditation, out of sight  
Of the rough world and all its shows of death—  
White clouds of lilies, and soft pansies blew  
All round me in the sweet of their own breath,  
And by the gate a flowering wonder grew,  
Draped to the ground as in a snowy wreath—  
So summer looks with winter peeping through.

## " WRIT IN WATER "

THE teasing wind veers in capricious leaps,  
And ere it settles on a steady wake,  
Flutters in sudden gusts upon the lake,  
Ruffling you there the water into heaps  
Of dusky leaves and branches; then it sweeps  
Into a racing cloud or formless snake,  
Or shivering hills that soon spread out and break  
With soundless crash,—showing you little peeps  
Of tree, and flower, and hill and grassy glade,—  
Then all the shuddering surface smoothly clears,  
And the blown visions troop away and fade.  
So do the consummations of the years  
Flicker and fail upon the boundless sea  
That holds the secrets of eternity.

## MUSIC

WHAT visions from the wonder land of dreams  
Float o'er me on the magic wings of sound !  
What mountains with the gold of morning crowned  
Rise into radiant skies ! what filmy gleams  
Dance on the waters of bright silver streams  
That flow for ever through enchanted ground !  
What thundering torrents leap with sudden bound,  
Scattering a mist of rainbow tinted beams  
Into the light ! and what sweet scents are here  
From flowers no mortal eye hath ever seen,  
Drenching the wind with fragrance that hath been  
Till now the desert's breath ! what gusts of fear  
Wail in the fretting strings ! what heavy teen  
Moans low along the gloomy atmosphere !

## AB IMO PECTORE

## I

LORD of pure hopes and holy influence !  
Fill all my heart with soft assuaging thoughts,  
Let me be touched with that divinest sense  
Which is not hasty in unmannered torts,  
But goes in wistful silence, like a nun  
Wrapped in her veil of mercies through the earth  
To tender ministrations ; let me shun  
The cold thin laughter of the cynic's mirth,  
The miser's lust, the cheat's degrading plots,  
The pride of place and social circumstance,  
And all th' intemperate fevers that are blots  
Upon the soul's white radiance of romance ;  
Destroy all spites, O Lord ! all secret evils  
That hold me down to sympathy for devils.

## AB IMO PECTORE

## II

BE pitiful, O God ! through all the years !  
And when I cannot see Thy glories shine  
On field or sky, nor any light divine  
In my own heart because of bitter tears  
That blind me, and when darkness reigns, and fears  
Annul my joys, and my sad spirits pine  
Like flowers drenched in rain of burning brine,  
Or tender buds a freezing season sears,  
O Lord ! of mercies then, and peaceful days,  
And immemorial quiet, let me feel  
(Even me, alas ! who cannot rightly plead)  
The full inflowing fervour of Thy grace,  
Which in my heart perchance may come to heal  
The piteous wounds that now for ever bleed.

## AB IMO PECTORE

## III

AH ! God ! I said, is this my way to go ?  
This rayless pit where murky mists uproll,  
Cold as a wind that wanders round the pole,  
Must I endure its unimagined woe,  
And strain to quell its terrors, till I grow  
Blind as a runner ere he touch the goal,  
And as he loses, shall I lose control  
Of heart and limb, and perish even so ?

No voice makes answer, and no beams dispel  
The pall of doubt that on my spirit lies ;  
No songs of joy enchant ; no silver bell  
Rings out glad peals through these disastrous skies ;  
But on this path that circles down to hell  
Only wild echoes of despair arise.

## AB IMO PECTORE

## IV

THIS is the time—no other—now at last,  
Free from the sins that held my soul in bonds,  
As slimy things are held in slimy ponds,  
And may not 'scape, now ere the conquered past  
(That like a demon with wild eyes aghast,  
Stares from behind huge poison-spotted fronds)  
Infects me with the spirit that responds  
To the old habits I have lately cast  
Wholly behind me, now let me be quick  
To run upon the path that leads ahead,  
Not daunted, nor confused by any trick  
Of circumstances ; but seeing still the red  
Far dawn that soon will be a blaze of light  
If only I refuse to think of night.



## FATE

OUR fate is round us like a viewless net,  
Woven of thoughts, inheritances, deeds,  
And all the drift of circumstantial weeds  
About the shores of being that are set,  
Imponderable strands no mortal fret  
Hath power to fray ; the inevitable seeds  
Sown by the gods along the cosmic meads  
(The gods who sow and never know regret)  
Throw round us their imperishable bents ;  
Webs knitted in the house of destiny  
Enmesh the yearning visage of the soul,  
And though it cry, the sequence of events,  
The march and order of the mighty whole  
Follow unchanged through all eternity.

## QUIET DEATH

To die and be no more, to pass away  
Like downy mist from off the mountain side,  
That with the flowing of the roseate tide  
Goes like a breath into the burning day,  
Invisible along its azure way,  
Leading to spaces wherein planets hide ;  
To cease so smoothly and be quit of pride,  
And done with all the foibles of this clay,  
Quit of the drags, the little cold conceits,  
The fevered weeks of brooding villainies,  
The despicable plots that cloud the mind,  
And hopes that ever prove phantasmal cheats—  
So to be rid of these, and more than these,  
Were to be blessed above the common kind.

## THE REAPER

IF one should with his final breath repent  
And prostrate all his soul for evil ways  
In hope of mercy, if his clouding gaze,  
Now catching light that hitherto was spent  
In vain for him, sees every wrong event  
In his whole span of years, as in a blaze  
Of sudden fire one sees with the stark amaze  
Wide tracts of dusty ruin, where a rent  
Yawns through the earth, will he go down to sleep  
With no more debt to pay because of sin ?  
It may not be ! his very hands must reap,  
Until the hideous crop be gathered in,  
All he hath sown ; and though he cry and weep  
He hath no rest till all be clean within.

## COMMONPLACES

THERE is a sigh in every breeze that blows ;  
The brightest song hath store of sorrow in it ;  
Death glideth in the weakest stream that flows,  
And joy flies all who reach and strain to win it ;  
In every spring a fading autumn broods,  
And summer smiles with winter at her heart ;  
The merriest crowd doth hint of solitudes,  
And light in darkness hath a counterpart ;  
The gayest laughter hath a touch of doom,  
The lightest speech an undertone of pain ;  
The youngest heart will soon be in the tomb,  
And cold annihilation will retain  
In frozen grasp no eloquence can move  
All living things and what they hate or love.

## ARE WE BUT SMOKE ?

ARE we no more than little rings of smoke  
Blown from the lips into the ambient air,  
That slowly fade, or by a sudden stroke  
Are shattered out of form ? Do we compare  
With things so frail their only life is that  
Which a breath gives them ? In the final sum  
Are we but dregs that foul the wineless vat,  
Sour leaves and litter ? or such frothy scum  
As the spent waves deliver to the beach ?  
Do such deep conscious beings suffer death  
Irrevocably at the last ? Will each  
Pass like a smoke when he resigns his breath,  
Or once again through un conjectured fields  
Follow a dream whose capture nothing yields ?

## DEJECTION

WE move dejected through a world of gloom ;  
While the sun shines we tread the dusty way,  
And all night long the sorrows of the day  
React themselves in visions that assume  
Wild, ghastly shapes, until the sleepless room  
Is like a cell where maniacs curse and pray,  
Tainting the air with flakes of fatal spume  
Breathed from sick lungs already in decay ;  
Our restless hearts beat fiercely up a scale  
Of misery, and on the highest note  
Will sometimes break and in a moment end ;  
But the sad lips will mostly smile and pale,  
And the voice frolic in the aching throat,  
For so we smother what we cannot mend.

## THE QUEST

## I

BLINDLY we seek through all the vernal years,  
And mostly fail because we cannot see  
The real behind the seeming entity ;  
Blindly we seek, protected by no fears  
Of sorrow and inevitable tears,  
Should our mischoice disturb the harmony  
That sings in love, as in the sunlit sea  
The organ music of the shining spheres  
Sings of divine attractions, that beget  
Beauty for ever ; yea, we find and take,  
And straightway all the agonies awake  
To haunt our spirits with their ceaseless fret ;  
Two lives that missed the bourne of love, must  
quake  
For ever in the deserts of regret.

## THE QUEST

## II

AND when we wake our souls have touched despair,  
And reached the oozy bottom of the deep  
Where dead hopes lie, as in a broken heap  
The dreams of youth, that down the golden stair  
Tumbled to ruin wholly past repair  
Are gathered ; lo ! our eyes no longer weep  
Such numbing cold is round our hearts to keep  
The fountains hard however warm the air ;  
And now we brace our limbs to swim away  
Each from the other on the sundering waves,  
But cannot, since we are old custom's slaves,  
And marriage bonds we dare not thus essay  
To break ; we hold together till death saves,  
And only smile into the closing day.



## THE QUEST

## III

THE woman pales, and the man glooms his brows,  
And both are sad for something gone awry ;  
Deep in their hearts, unseen by any eye  
The mischief seethes ; and both regret their vows  
On lonely pillows, when the silent house  
Stands blindly dumb beneath the starry sky ;  
The sobbing of their sorrow even cows  
The callous fates, and though no uttered cry—  
Soul anguish bleeds in silence unto death—  
Calls out of dreams across the senseless dark  
For pity and surcease of aching dole,  
Pain goes into the air with every breath  
Exhaled in sleep, and wild heart pulses mark  
The poignant griefs that wring each wasted soul.

## THE QUEST

## IV

PERCHANCE no one or both along the way  
Will shine the face that should have crowned the  
quest

While yet the dawn was like a rosy crest  
Upon the hills. Then will the soul obey  
New-roused emotions by a vision blessed  
With sudden light? Then will the barren breast,  
So long the home of stale indifference, play  
Its part of love against the bitter sway  
Of memories that hurt? Will the found face  
Smile life into the dull evasive eyes  
And help the soul to doff her memories  
That wore so long the mantle of disgrace?  
Or will "too late" be like a wall to rise  
Full in the path which neither may displace?

## FUTILITY

WHEREFORE this arduous and unyielding strife  
To garner love and cling to happiness  
Against the use of nature? In what life  
Moves a glad pulse unwitting of distress?  
Is honesty a bar to crime's offence?  
Doth truth prevail like treacherous deceits?  
Can the soul curb the ever eager sense  
That lures the body to unholy feats?  
Will innocence disarm conspiracy?  
Or weakness move compassion in the strong,  
When the last breath escapes, and the last sigh  
Fails on the lips? All seems compact of wrong;  
Yet our brave souls endure, nor cease to hope  
Though slipping down the inevitable slope.

## AS WE HAVE LIVED WE DIE

YEA, is it so? will death relieve the soul  
Of its most secret and inveterate sin?  
Will all be altered when behind the goal  
Set to the flesh the spirit shall pass in?  
It cannot be, as we have lived we die;  
Prone in the dust of our unrighteous deeds  
At the last moment we shall surely lie,  
And so pass forth; nothing there is but breeds  
The thing it is; evil shall still be so  
Though spirit-borne into ethereal ways,  
Yet there perchance a stronger will may grow  
To do some work which God may crown with praise  
As being good; a new environment  
Remoulds till we lose the old intent.

## FERVENTES INSANIA

A LUSTFUL passion is the death of love,  
For when assuaged there is no reason left  
Why any more the sullen pulse should move,  
Or the lips hunger for a rosy theft.  
Even as an adder that delights to sting,  
Injecting death into his victim's blood,  
So desperate lust will in a moment's fling  
Poison the sweetest spirit's source of good,  
Until all thoughts, all wishes, all desires,  
All dreams that fall between the dusk and light  
And take the soul with longing, all are fires  
That feed the temper of this appetite,  
Caught in the circle of whose ruining spell,  
Men are destroyed ere they consider well.

## THE NERVES OF GOD

WE are the nerves of God ; through us He feels,  
And through all pulsing ions scattered far  
In dust of worlds or light of throbbing star,  
Through all this restless universe reveals  
Or hides securely under frozen seals  
Of silence, and through viewless things that mar  
The bloom of beauty, waging ceaseless war  
Until the higher issue faints and reels  
Beneath the stress of being ; that which draws  
Life from the centre, with returning flow  
Invades again the source from whence it came,  
And through the secret essence of its cause  
Sends speeding tremors ; the peripheral glow  
Shivers to God along a wave of flame.

## THE RHEBOK

ON the cool mountain side, whose scattered stones  
Are coloured like himself, he guards his ewes  
With vigilant care, and when the quivering dew  
Take the first light, and rosy curtained thrones  
Tower in the east above the barren cones,  
That far beneath him flaunt their fiery hues,  
He rises, and in soft persuasive tones  
Wakes his small charge, or in the air pursues  
With anxious gaze the eagle sweeping round,  
Or gets a glut of tainted wind, and blows  
His thin, clear whistle on a piercing note  
To warn the herd, that with a sudden bound  
Leaps to the call, and like a whirlwind goes  
Over the ridge above the Shepherd's cote.

## THE BUFFALO

ENCASED in mud, and breathing valley steam,  
And teased all day by clouds of stinging flies,  
That smother round his flanks and mouth and eyes,  
Provoking rage, till an unlidded gleam  
Darts from each eye across the sombre stream,  
And his great bulk is shaken, to surprise  
And scare away the pestering hosts, that rise  
Black in the air about him ; parrots scream  
Above him in the tangled overgrowth,  
And monkeys chatter, and the green snake glides  
From branch to branch with supple weaving thews,  
But he, though irked by noise and stir, is loth  
To leave the wallowing-pool that coats his sides,  
And back and belly with protective ooze.



## EEN VOORTREKKERS BRIEF

Nu wil ik in het kort verhaal  
Hoe dat wij woon hier aan de Vaal.

Gij weet toen wij van Graaffrenet  
Met wagens en ons vee verzit,  
Toen was daar in de lucht geen volk ;  
Zoo droog was dit, geen ding wou groei,  
En wij zijn bijna uitgeroei.  
Ook was de wetten daar zoo straf,  
Geen hond kon vrijelijk vecht of blaf ;  
Zoo nauwelijks was wij daar omring,  
Wij durf niet dans, nog minder zing,  
En, ach, als wij een doppie steek  
Dan blus de heele wereld bleek ;  
En de vervloekste wet was daar,  
Een eeuwighduurende gevaar.  
Hier is dit anders—als is stil,  
Een man kan handel volgens wil.  
De veldkornet is Piet z'n oom ;  
Hij is te vriendelijk om te schroom ;  
En als een kaffer niet wil hoor,  
Of kom hij met zijn leugens voor,  
Of word parmantig als wij knoor,  
Dan val wij op zijn baatje neer,  
En strijk hom tot hij goed bekeer.

Dit voorrecht, en ook anders meer  
 Laat ons een vrije leve voer,  
 Zeer aangenaam voor eenig boer.

Hier woon wij in een vraaije wereld,  
 Met bloemen en met dauw bepareld ;  
 De zoete geur van bloeiend veld  
 Is hier voor ons genot gesteld.  
 Hier stort de regen daagelijks neer,  
 En droogte vrees wij nimmer meer.  
 De gras groei hooger dan een paard,  
 De beeste eet hul dik als Tjaart—  
 Gij kan hom goed, hij's nu zoo vet  
 Wij moet hom elke stoel belet ;  
 En voor hom is geen bed te pas,  
 Zoo slaap hij nes een os, op gras.  
 Zoo als een zeekoe snork hij snachs,  
 En schrik ons dikwils onverwachs.  
 Hij dwing nu ernstig om te trouw,  
 Mar dit zal zwaar gan met zijn vrouw,  
 Want, geloof mij, nevens zoo een knaap  
 Is dit niet makelijk om te slaap.

Klein Sannie het de kenkhoes zeer,  
 Wij moet haar borst met bok vet smear,  
 En zij word beter, dank de Heer.

Jannie is door zijn paard geskop.  
 De dier was vuurig in zijn kop,

Of dit door ziekte was, of wat  
 Is duister, mar de paard was glat  
 Van zijn gewoone houding kweit  
 Toen Jannie aan zijn haakscheen bijt,  
 (Dit moes hij doen, want Kolboy wou  
 Volstrek niet roer, en Piet z'n vrouw  
 Seg, " bijt hom aan zijn haakscheen, Jan,  
 Dit is de aller beste plan ")  
 Met eens maak hij een groot lawaai,  
 Hij skop, en bijt ook, nes een haai,

En eer dat Jannie hom kon los,  
 Krijg hij de klap net op zijn kos.  
 Ik vrees de kind zou daadelijk sterf,  
 Hij word zoo bleek als kuiken nerf,  
 Mar gelukig had wij in de huis  
 Een vaatje brandewijn, en Tijs  
 Schenk hom een stijve dop daarvan ;  
 Toen hij dit drink kon hij weer staan ;  
 Mar nu's zijn maag zoo zwak en teer,  
 Hij klaag geduurig, min of meer.

Stuur ons met Andries weder op  
 Een hoeveelheid rhenostertop.  
 Dit is de beste medesijne  
 Voor zwakke maag, en derem pijn.  
 Bij ons groei zulke bosjes niet.  
 Des puure gras in ons gebied.

Ou tanta Vogel lijden zwaar  
 Aan kanker, en is in gevaar.  
 Wij het nu al ons kunst gebruik,  
 Mar, ach, de pijn blijf in haar buik.  
 Wij maak van kanker bosjes thee,  
 En geef haar ander middels mee,  
 Mar te vergeefs ; de kanker groei  
 Al grooter, en haar neus de bloei.  
 Zij is nu ergelijk dun en bloot,  
 En peins geduurig om den dood.

Verder, is almal hier gezond,  
 Behalve de zwaart stompstaart hond.  
 Hij was door een vergiftig slang  
 Gebijt, ik denk, op't lenker vang.  
 Een kaffer dokter was ter hand,  
 En met zijn onbeschoft verstand  
 Breng hij de hond 't gevaar voorbij ;  
 Dit was te wonderlijk voor mij  
 Om van de zaak te zit en denk,  
 Dat Got zou aan een kaffer schenk  
 De wijsheid om een slang z'n gif  
 Geheel van 't lichaam uit te sif.  
 Ja, wel, de schepsel het misschien  
 Ook van de Heere wat verdien ;  
 Hoewel hij zonder ziel geschap is,  
 En kom niet meer toe dan de aapies,

Aan 't Almacht is dit altoos vrij  
 Te handel zo's Hij wil ; daarbij  
 Moet wij nog een gedachte maak,  
 Elk vruchte het zijn eige smaak,  
 En of een lichaam wit of zwart is  
 Hij is geen man wie zinder baard is.

De grootste schade hier bestaan  
 Door de vervlukste lagavaan.  
 De dier kom dikwils van zijn gat  
 Om hier een hoender weg te vat.  
 Piet doet zijn uiterst 'hom te schiet,  
 Mar al zijn moeite is verniet,  
 De lagavaan glip hom voorbij,  
 En spring in't water, los en vrij.

De wereld nu is luister groen,  
 En wild is hier bij de millioen.  
 De vlakte dril als hulle roer,  
 Een vraai gezicht voor eenig boer.  
 Wanneer ik lus het, zit ik neer  
 Niet verder dan de voorhuis deur,  
 Zoek gauw de vetste eland uit,  
 Haak los—zijn vel klopt nes biscuit—  
 Hij leg en beeve op zijn rug,  
 Zijn klauwtjes rillen in de lucht ;  
 De andere denk niet om te vlucht,  
 Schrik net zoo effen, en begin  
 Weder te wei met ernstig zin.

Nu wil ik in het kort vertel  
 Hoe kom ik aan een—ding z'n vel.  
 't was helder maanlicht, en wij wacht  
 Voor ongedierte op dit nacht.  
 Omtrent een duizend tree van't huis,  
 Waar een dof paatje 't ander kruis,  
 Hier zit wij, elk met zijn geweer,  
 Ons staarten op een miershoop neer.  
 Rondom was bosche, mar de maan  
 Schijnt helder uit de lucht ons aan.  
 Dit was zoo stil, geloof mij, zwaar,  
 Geen windje roer de kleinste blaar ;  
 Zoo stil gij kon de gras hoor bloei,  
 En ook uw eige haare groei.  
 Hier zit wij spraakeloos voor een tijd.  
 Ik het begin mij zeer te spijl  
 Dat ik zoo dom was om te wacht  
 Op zoo een schoone maanlicht nacht.  
 Mij beene was bij destijds stijf ;  
 De jicht was in mij heele lijf,  
 En net zoo's ik mij kop wou draai  
 Was daar in't bosch een groot lavaai.  
 Wi j hoor een ezel skop en schreuw,  
 " Mij Got," zeg Piet, " daar is de leeuw "  
 Ik greep met eens mij ou geweer,  
 En spring zoo hastig van de grond,  
 De wereld draai voor't eerste rond.  
 Ik kruip voorzigtig door de bosch,

(Gij weet een leeuw is niet een vos,  
 En van hem leer ik alte wel,  
 Hij breek zijn nek wie spring te snel)  
 De honde blaf hul bijna dood,  
 En ik en Piet was in de noot ;  
 Mij hart klop koud, mij ribbes tril,  
 En daar bij voel ik zeer onwel ;  
 Mar nogtans kruip wij door de bosch,  
 En amper schiet ik daar een os.  
 Wij ziet geen leeuw ; de honde raasch  
 Geduurig bij een witpens vaars.  
 Ik loer voorzigtig door de woud.  
 Piet zeg, " ik denk zijn staart is koud."  
 Toen wij nu denk des alles oor,  
 Kom weder van de bosch een knoor.  
 Piet stel hom klaar, en ik ruk om ;  
 Dit voel of iets van achter kom.  
 " Daar kom hij," hoor ik nu van Piet.  
 " Schiet Oom, de dier is op ons, schiet."  
 Ik ruk de " sanna " schielijk op—  
 (Gij weet zij kan zoo vreeslijk skop)  
 En eer ik iets kon bellijk zien  
 Haak ik de schoot los—nu mischien  
 Denk gij ik het een leeuw geschiet,  
 Mar (zwaar, ik schrijf dit met verdriet)  
 Wat ik geschiet het geef een brul,  
 Mij Got," zeg Piet, " des oom z'n bul,"  
 Ik schiet hom dood eer ik dit wis,



Zoo ga dit is gij haastig is.  
Van dit gebeurtenis is't te leere,  
Te dapper kost jou ook mar veere.  
Zoo kom ik aan een-ding z'n vel.  
Dit brief is lang genoeg, varwel.



## KOFFIES LIED

Ik geef niet om voor uintjes,  
Nog minder voor rosijntjes,  
Geef mij mar net een schenksel uit de ou beminde  
pot,  
Of daar melk is maak geen zaak,  
Wat te wit is het geen smaak,  
En de zwartste koffie drink ik met een eeuwig frisch  
genot.

Is daar zuiker, is daar ni,  
Dit is "all de zame to me,"  
Hoe bitterder hoe beter, zoo bring aan de pot en  
schenk.  
Was Katrin de hoogste "lady,"  
Drink zij nog geen "lemonade" ni,  
Zoo een flauwe drank's te misselijk voor een mensch  
wat koffie drink.

Of dit van gerst gebrouw is,  
Zoo lang als dit ni flauw is  
Smaak koffie voor mij beter dan de beste boland's  
wijn.  
Eer de eerste hoender roep  
Zit ik wachtend op de stoep ;  
Voor een rookend koppie koffie ach, gij weet ni hoe  
ik kwijn.

Zoo's de dag begin te breek,  
En de sterre te verbleek,  
Voel ik vreeslijk hol na benne, en ik weet des koffie  
tijd,

“ Sta op ou vrouw, des laat al,  
Kom af nu van de katel,  
En maak de koffie daadelijk want de licht schijn  
door de ruit.”

Als gij op kommando rij,  
Ga gij jacht, of ga gij vrij,  
De beste drank ter wereld kom mar uit een boer kom-  
buis ;

Zoo hier is voor de koppie,  
G'lijk vol van geurig koffie,  
Een drank wat net gezond is op de veld of in de huis.

## EEN DROOM

EEN nacht het ik een vreemde droom.  
 Ik zie voor't huis een ruischend stroom,  
 Met schuimend water, wit als room,  
                     Die kook en zwel ;  
 Op't wal was een wie neder buk,  
 En slinger onder de verdruk  
 Van wereld's droef en ongeluk,  
                     Of die van hel.

Haar lokken zweven in de wind,  
 En op haar borst draag zij een kind ;  
 Diep, kon ik zien, was hij bemind ;  
                     Zij ziet alleen  
 De bleek gelaatje (want de maan  
 Was helder), en daar kom een traan  
 En raakt zijn doodelijk lippies aan,  
                     Te koud te ween.

Zij kruip al nader aan de vloed,  
 Geest wit was zij, alsof haar bloed  
 Verzuigd was ; op de water spoed  
                     Een lijk voorbij ;  
 Toen dit gebuur verdwijn mij droom ;  
 Zij was de vrouw van Piet'zn oom,  
 En destijds sterf hij, nes een boom  
                     Snel afgesnij.

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